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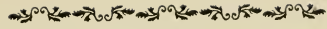


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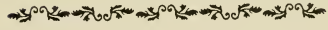








## Illini Poetry







# Illini Poetry

1924-1929

*Edited by*

Paul Landis



1929

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## INTRODUCTION

FIVE YEARS have passed since the Poetry Society of the University of Illinois published its first volume, *Illini Poetry—1918-1923*. That volume was a pioneer among collections of university poetry, and the success which it achieved fully justified the courage and rewarded the labor, which was great, of Professor Bruce Weirick in editing it. For some years now the edition has been exhausted, and the book is permanently out of print.

In coming before the public for the second time the Poetry Society stands less in need of introduction. Those who are familiar with the older book will recognize some of the authors in the new, we hope with pleasure; and we have no doubt that they will regret the absence of others. Still there would be little excuse for publishing this book were it not for the new names which here bear witness to the fact that the Poetry Society is a living institution. Changing gradually as the classes come and go, it has continued during the past five years to hold its fortnightly meetings at which the poems are read and discussed.

What change there has been in the nature of the poetry during the last five years may best be

left to others to point out. The long poems which distinguish this volume from the former one represent the prize poems during the period. One cannot, I think, fail to note the increased number of poems of classical inspiration. What this means I do not know, but I cannot but deem it a heartening sign that in this day the poetry of a state university may have an academic flavor.

If our book find favor, we shall be greatly pleased; at any rate there was great fun at its making.

PAUL LANDIS

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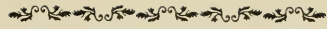
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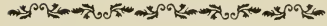
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# Illini Poetry





## SONGS FROM *THE DEATH OF KUBLA*

### I.

"We are the princes of Asia,  
Sons of the snow and the stars,  
Born to the horse like the centaurs of old,  
Flashing our bright scimitars  
Edged with a frost that is bitter and cold  
And fresh from the fashioning of scars.

We are the Tartars of Baikal,  
Gods of the lakes and plains.  
We ruled the north when the planets were  
young.

Brood of the winds and the rains,  
Flinging our lances where lightning is flung  
Out beyond Heaven's domains.

We are the Lords of Kerulun,  
Wielding the might of the Pole,  
Shoeing our steeds with the curse of the North,  
Clasping its soul to our soul  
And riding like devils from Hell, issue forth  
To claim the whole world for our toll."

### II.

"The singing arrow of Tartary flies,  
Flies through the dark and the mist

## ILLINI POETRY

And the soul of a foeman ascends to the skies  
At the single turn of the wrist.  
The bleeding soul of a man, who dies  
At the turn of a Tartar wrist.

We have notched our shafts with a Tartary  
    song,  
Death in the dark and the mist,  
And they speed through the night with the  
    bite of the thong  
And the single turn of the wrist.  
For life is weak and death is strong  
At the turn of a Tartar wrist.

We have carried the fear of the Tartary  
    hordes,  
Hordes of the dark and the mist,  
With the burning brand and the flaming swords  
And the single turn of the wrist.  
And all the north proclaims us lords  
At the turn of a Tartar wrist.

So ride where ye will my Tartary men,  
Sons of the dark and the mist,  
For your strength is more than the strength  
    of ten  
At the single turn of the wrist.  
And we can conquer the north again  
At the turn of a Tartar wrist."

# ILLINI POETRY

## J A E L

### A Drama in Verse

Prize Poem, 1926

#### C A S T

J A E L . . . . . The Wife of Heber

H E B E R . . . . . A Desert Chief

S I S E R A . . . . . A Prince of Canaan

Messenger

Three Old Men

Scene: The camp of Heber in the early evening. To the left tents and a fire around which the three old men sit. To the right the tent of Heber. The stars are out and the new moon hangs low in the skies.

#### *First Old Man*

The pinions of the night are low and black.  
The moon is blue among the star-washed rack;  
Blue as a babe breath stricken at its birth;  
Blue as the sea that laves the haggard earth.  
Comrades, these signs portend some fearful  
ill. . . .

See how the witch fires dance among the hills!

## ILLINI POETRY

### *Second Old Man*

(Indicating the Third Old Man)

Our fellow nods ; his star is nearly set  
Upon the dome of God's dark minaret.

### *First Old Man*

He sleeps and with his alabaster hands  
Clings to what little life he yet commands,  
As the green fingers of the waving palm  
Cling to a sunbeam when the day is done.

### *Second Old Man*

The desert is a ghastly place to die. . . .  
The sand, the sun, the brazen strip of sky.  
Give me white music and the fragrant vine  
To stir my sluggish veins like magic wine  
Or let me die in some old garden rare,  
Where silver lilies beckon in the air  
And the cool azure of the towering skies  
Is spangled with the wings of butterflies.  
'Tis sweet to die where dreaming fountains play ;  
To close one's eyes upon the calm of day  
And conn the dulcet measures of the lute,  
Muting the roaring sphere till all is mute.

## ILLINI POETRY

### *Third Old Man*

(Muttering in his sleep)

Today, when I poured wine upon your grave ;  
I heard a voice and saw the iris wave ;  
A silver moth arose and turned and fell  
To tell me that your spirit feasted well.

### *First Old Man*

Hear that? He speaks to one within the tomb ;  
The fingers of the night are stained with doom ;  
The dogs of Hell are coursing through the  
clouds  
And claws of bone are tearing at their shrouds ;  
For graves are op'ed and spirits walk abroad,  
Something has fired the anger of a god.

### *Heber*

How base becomes the heart of man grown old,  
Just reason flees and haunting fears take hold.  
Strong arms that once were foremost in the fray  
Now falter as they raise their hands to pray.  
The night is fair and graves are not agape  
Nor do the clouds assume unwonted shape ;  
For the great Bull of Canaan rules with might  
And makes my star ascendant of the night.

## ILLINI POETRY

### *Third Old Man*

(Muttering in his sleep)

The Bull has torn the cloud-tops with his horns  
And the proud king of Hazor sits and mourns.

### *First Old Man*

Old men dream deep.

### *Heber*

And falsely too, I deem.

Tonight the vultures sweep o'er Kishon's  
stream,

Where all the flower of Israel lies dead ;  
In Canaan's camp they toy with Barak's head  
And spin a song about his ruddy beard,  
The Bull is strong and ever to be feared.  
To-morrow I shall sit by Jabin's seat  
And drink his wine and taste his fragrant meat,  
Watching the women of Naptali dance,  
The lovely captives of his mighty lance.  
Lo, I have sworn an oath on Jabin's blade  
And touched the sacred Talisman of jade ;  
Now as a sign that peace between us bides  
I take his daughter Jael to be my bride.



## ILLINI POETRY

### *First Old Man*

The supple mare soon steals the stallion's fire  
And courage bends the knee to fierce desire.

### *Heber*

The golden stars that wander through the night  
Find 'neath her brow, themselves in flesh bedight,  
Half-curtained by dark tapestries of blue.  
And huddled lilies nurtured by the dew  
Are shamed by the pale beauty of her breast.  
The haughty rose that sways on Sharen's crest  
And all the crimson vintage of the south  
Are wan before the crescent of her mouth.

### *Second Old Man*

Yea once the desert blossomed like a rose;  
Whither has fled its perfume no one knows.  
Love is a ball of crystal, through its glass,  
Man sees not that the things of beauty pass  
And learns not to his ultimate dismay,  
That high sprung passion lives but for a day.

(Enter a messenger)

### *Messenger*

Like a faint dove before a hawk I come  
Flying the roll of Barak's victorious drum.

## ILLINI POETRY

The beast of Canaan gasps upon the field  
And Sisera beats upon his brazen shield,  
But no man comes, for horse and rider flee,  
The rest drift southward to the curling sea.

### *Heber*

Man, you are mad ; no hand can e'er avail  
Against the Bull and all the priests of Baal.

### *Messenger*

No human hand perchance, this stranger god  
Fights with the lightning and thunderous rod,  
And pours the darts of Heaven on your head.  
Armies of heroes rise where'er he treads  
With burning spears and javelins of flame ;  
The raging storm winds chant his wondrous  
name.

Against such might a blade of steel is vain.  
To trust in arms upon a fire-swept plain  
Or challenge trumpets with the whirling sand  
Is more than mortal valour can demand.

### *Heber*

Dark visaged man, cursed harbinger of woe,  
Blood spattered clown in fortune's magic show,

## ILLINI POETRY

Hide your base brow in some black ocean's  
stream,  
For I would sink to sleep again and dream.

### *Messenger*

I go my lord to Hazor's blighted gates,  
Where on his throne the ill-starred monarch  
waits.

### *Heber*

Arise, old men, we ride to join the fray,  
A sudden thrust may save a fatal day,  
These desert men ere now have drunken deep  
And victory is an easy charm to sleep.

### (Enter Jael)

My lord this tumult 'roused me from my bed,  
Your cheeks are pale, your eyes are filled with  
dread.  
What fearful thing has made your lips so white?

### *Heber*

All things are well, 'tis but the winds of night,  
That are so chill after the heat of noon.  
We ride upon the merchants of Samsun,  
Who urge their camels forward hurriedly

## ILLINI POETRY

In hope that by the sun they'll reach the sea.  
Soon you'll have silver bracelets for your arms  
And great eyed pearls and tiny ivory charms  
Such as the women of the Ganges wear  
To prove the grotesque blackness of their hair.  
Now we must go, the hour brooks no delay  
If we shall down our quarry by the day.

(Exit all but Jael)

*Jael*

Such has become the fate of Hazor's maid  
To wed this prince of desert renegades,  
To share his bed and whelp his hawk-like brood  
And rule with him the realm of solitude.  
Where was my lover when this deed was done?  
Where was the King of Oran's august son?  
The noble Sisera, captain of the host,  
Who feared not god nor demon, man nor ghost.  
Why came he not to soothe my rising fears  
And kiss away the torrent of my tears?  
Lo, life is dumb, her singing radiance  
Is stilled like some lost movement of the dance,  
And the calm march of never-ending time  
Is but a faintly shadowed pantomime.  
But hope once blazing never will grow cold,  
He yet may come in chariot of gold

## ILLINI POETRY

And with a gesture spare me from my doom. . . .  
The hand of Fate weaves softly on my loom.

(Enter Sisera, who stops out of sight)

Life is a fragile bush to which we cling  
As dangling o'er the pit of doom we swing,  
The pit wherein red-eyed and mouth agape  
Fierce Death lies waiting in a dragon's shape  
To claim us when our tired fingers sleep.  
Around the bushes now two strange mice creep  
And at its ancient stem caught in the clay  
The black mouse gnaws at night, the white by  
day.

But still we cling and fear to lose our hold,  
Because the sky is sometimes tinged with gold  
And oft the dew upon the bush is rare  
A lethal potion for our grave despair.  
Why should we not our puny hopes dismiss  
And let ourselves sink to that cold abyss?

### *Sisera*

Because the sky is sometimes tinged with gold  
And oft the dew upon the bush is rare.

### *Jael*

There was a time that voice would make me  
whole  
And fling its music through my trembling soul;

## ILLINI POETRY

But now it fills my heart with sudden fears  
Can it be but the echo of the years,  
That were so fair, when nights were strangely  
    white  
And every hour brought a new delight.  
'Tis but a demon sent to vex my brain!  
Away cold ghost! But hearken, once again,  
Perhaps he floats in Kishon's awful tide  
And now his soul has hastened to my side.

### *Sisera*

Fairest of Hazor, raise your downcast eyes;  
The moon still triumphs in the star-spun skies  
And Spring comes on more glorious and true  
Than any that two lovers ever knew.

### *Jacl*

Your lips, my lord, are sweet, your words are  
    fire,  
That kindle in my bosom deep desire.  
I feared you dead, a victim of the fray,  
Deaf to my cries and blind and cold and gray.

### *Sisera*

I would that I were stretched beneath the stars  
Bereft of breath and torn with bitter scars,

## ILLINI POETRY

Toy of the winds and victim of the sun,  
Plodding again that road, to where all Life  
begun.

### *Jael*

You lost the day; you fled before the foe,  
Say that I lie, I can't believe it so.

### *Sisera*

Your words are true, true as the course of time,  
True as the gods eternal and sublime.  
The Bull of Canaan fell before the wrath  
Of Israel's god and all the men of Gath  
Lie writhing on that terror-smitten plain,  
Slaves to their fears and martyrs to their pain.

### *Jael*

The gods are false and those who trust them find  
Words for the dumb and beauty for the blind.  
Find faith in arms and in a war-like glance,  
Fight like a man and leave the rest to chance.  
'Tis better to have fought and bravely died,  
Than fled devoid of honor and of pride.

### *Sisera*

Reproach me not, beloved, for my flight;  
I love the moon and all the flame of night;

## ILLINI POETRY

I love the sun and all the roses sweet,  
The crimson dove and rubied parrakeet.  
Lo, I am young, not weighted down with age,  
My days would hardly fill a single page  
Of time's great book, wide written though it be.  
I still would watch the shadows on the sea.  
The clouds that crown the distant mountain's  
head

Are soft and white. 'Tis ghastly to be dead  
And lapped among the clay 'till you are naught  
But some faint memory that an odd word  
brought.

Chide men not love, we live so short a while  
And men are cruel and cold and full of guile.  
Come, I would live a year, a day, an hour ;  
To see the hillsides once again in flower  
And hear the silver voices of the Spring  
And then I'll gladly pay my reckoning.

### *Jael*

There is a graver song than Beauty's song,  
A chant more noble, eloquent and strong,  
That bade our fathers pledge themselves to  
Death ;  
Forsake this sphere and fly where Ashtoreth  
Presides among the councils of the blest  
In that far realm that lies beyond the west.



## ILLINI POETRY

The sun must lose his rays in Duty's beams  
And stars must fade like ever fickle dreams,  
When Honour holds the warrior to obey.  
When Valour calls, there is no other way,  
The road is open and the vista clear  
Portrays a conqueror's pomp or hero's bier.

### *Sisera*

Your lips are quite unfitted for such words  
Dressed in full armor, like a man who girds  
A breastplate on, when robed in white attire  
To worship Peace and tend her altar fire.  
I can forget the war, its mad emprise  
Beneath the calm caresses of your eyes  
And all the battled hopes of alien lands  
Are naught before the whiteness of your hands.

### *Jael*

I am the daughter of a chieftain old,  
Born to the purple and bred to the gold;  
But this I remember, remember for ages:  
The hand that writes swiftly on History's pages  
Records but the valiant, the high and the just  
The deeds of the lover are flung with his dust.

### *Sisera*

The day is done, my coward's name is made.  
Could I but claim an hour from the shade

## ILLINI POETRY

Of time long past, I would renew my fame  
Or die, but not in misery and shame.

### *Jael*

You yet can die and win a hero's grave,  
Be called the wise, the noble and the brave.  
The gate of Death will gladly open wide,  
The key is sheathed in bronze against your side.

### *Sisera*

I cannot die that way, my hand is weak,  
My heart is weaker too, if it could speak  
What fragrant words would issue from my lips,  
Sweeter than nectar that forever drips  
From out the scented lily's honied store.  
Talk not of Death when Love's majestic shore  
Is just ahead and we are very young  
Not half our gallant days are yet unstrung  
From Life's sweet cord. Let us arise and go  
To some far place where none will ever know  
Our plight and why we came and who we are;  
'Tis better than if I from this cymar  
Snatched forth a knife and sunk it to my heart.  
Let us arise, give up, and hand in hand depart.

### *Jael*

I could not love thee in a coward's dress  
Though housed in some far land's forgetfulness.

## ILLINI POETRY

I love not thee as man but as all men,  
The final one, a creature cast of ten.  
Take up your dagger, seal your brow to Fate.  
Death comes at last, 'tis better soon than late ;  
Your perished name, resplendent, calm and  
white  
I then can cherish 'til eternal night.

### *Sisera*

Press me not closely, sweet, my strength doth  
wane,  
And all your subtle reasoning would be vain  
To turn me to your will, strong though it be.  
I chose not death, but Life and Love and thee.  
Come, I would sleep encushioned in your breast  
Lulled by your voice and by your hands caressed,  
Until my cares drop from me like a glove  
And I am garbed alone within your love.

The lights fade slowly and the two figures can  
scarcely be discerned. From a distance comes  
the beat of a tocsin and the chant of Deborah  
comes at regular intervals.

### Chorus

March on, my soul, march on in triumph proud,  
Hurl high thy blade ; begin thy song of praise ;  
Place thy feet firmly on the highest cloud  
And raise the chant of our most glorious days.

## ILLINI POETRY

Arise ye heavenly hosts and chorus loud,  
God in the highest, to Him eternal praise!

The Kings came forth with chariots of flame  
Dressed in bright armor, crowned with scarlet  
    bays;  
Megiddo's crystal waters soon became  
A reddened asp that groans before it slays.  
Sons of the morning, lift up your shouts, pro-  
    claim  
God in the highest, to Him eternal praise!

March on, my soul, march on, the stars on high  
Fought in their courses, shed their fiery rays  
Against that Prince of Canaan all the sky  
Turned back its blue and showed its awful grays.  
Ye choirs of angels raise the victor's cry,  
God in the highest, to Him eternal praise!

The lights come up slowly during the last  
verse and Jael is discovered standing with Sisera  
prone at her feet. The chant ceases for the mo-  
ment.

### *Jael*

My life is done, my love is crushed and dead  
Flung through the brow of that celestial head,  
That lies forgetful of the things that are

## ILLINI POETRY

The Spring, the sun, the evening's newest star.  
Moons will look down and roses nod and pass,  
Rain after rain will mingle with the grass;  
But he is gone, and time and space are naught.  
What man he was and all the things he wrought  
Are secret now, locked in my bosom deep.  
This thing I hold and shall forever keep,  
That he was brave, and loved and died a man.  
I will arise, return unto my clan  
And mourn for him while I have tears to shed,  
For tears are naught but kisses to the dead.

(Exit Jael)

Heber rushing in at the head of his party perceives the body of Sisera.

*Heber*

Those dogs of Judah. . . Who is this so cold?  
Wearing a prince's helm of triple gold.  
Great Lord of Canaan! 'tis thy captain brave  
Stretched at my feet in semblance of a slave.  
Where is the woman Jael . . . she loved him well.

(Enter Messenger)

*Messenger*

A thing, my lord, too terrible to tell.

## ILLINI POETRY

### *Heber*

Speak! Speak! thou canst not shock my hard-  
ened ears  
And stammer not, dumb smitten by thy fears.

### *Messenger*

Out of the wastes, with these now maddened  
eyes,  
I saw a wounded bull against the skies  
Charge wildly at a figure on the sands;  
I knelt and pressed my face against my hands  
And when I looked there lay so calm and pale  
That flower of women Canaan knew as . . .

### *Heber* (bowing his head)

Jael!!

The lights sink as Heber drops to his knees  
and as the curtain falls slowly the chant begins  
again.

### Chorus

Blessed above all women shall be Jael,  
Who dwelt among the desert in the ways,  
Whose hand was strong and fitted to the nail  
Smote the proud prince as he in slumber stays.  
Lift up the chant and never shall it fail  
God in the highest, to Him eternal praise!

The End

DON CAMERON ALLEN

[ 20 ]

## ILLINI POETRY

### QUERY

What's the wealth that age loans  
To a weathered house—  
To old trees with rain-stones  
Beaded down the boughs?

Why should time engender  
Mystic, mellow, kind  
Whispers in the slender  
Music of the wind?

Doubtless for the seeing  
On the musty shelves  
Of extended being  
Secrets of ourselves,

Not to be delivered  
Till we are, at last,  
Shining little shivered  
Pieces of the past.

BLANCHE BELL

### WINTER SONG

We've a chair ; we've a cup ;  
We have tea to pour.  
Leaves are dead and crumpled up  
All around the door.

## ILLINI POETRY

We were fickle and unkind  
In the sunny weather ;  
Now the chill is on the wind,  
Let us drink together !

Summer's foliage lies, today,  
In a musty pile ;  
We may chase the frost away  
For a little while.

We've a chair ; we've a cup,  
Hot and steaming here.  
Who can say what lips may sup  
With another year ?

BLANCHE BELL

## A GIRL IN THE NIGHT

She laughs: like sweeping wind on fragile  
strings  
The echo trails her untamed mirth, and mark  
How firmly the reverberation clings  
Far up along the fringes of the dark !

In sunset-stricken streams and wavering wells  
Her sultry hair gleams in the mean half-light—  
Let her hang clusters of wild silver bells  
Between this night and yet another night



## ILLINI POETRY

When some sad-hearted woman lies and grieves  
As soft as morning light lies on the leaves.

BLANCHE BELL

### AN AGING WOMAN

How bravely does she hold the gaze of Time,  
Who crowds her forward with unfailing feet!  
Her youth, that frailly poignant, transient-  
sweet

Sublime,

Soared like a young bird, sank as shudder-  
ingly,—

Lies helpless, caught against the fence of years,  
Hung on the old blood-rusted barb of fears,  
Frenziedly fluttering her one free wing,  
And seeks in vain to sing.

I cannot think that things so wise, so sweet,  
Can wither thus, all in a little day—  
Married to mould and darkened by decay,  
Can sleep content to hear the brittle beat  
Of rain above, the cutting of the sleet,  
The ripe, impulsive burst of swollen grain,  
The fog creep o'er the hills with feathered feet,  
And feel no pain.

In some remote exotic tropic wild,  
Where waver weird gay-winged things aloft,

## ILLINI POETRY

Where bright snakes coil and odorous leaves are  
piled

In rotting ridges where they fall, storm-strewn,  
She shall arise when pale, late winds sing soft,  
A rare night-blooming cerus 'gainst the moon.

BLANCHE BELL

### RONDEAU

Day was dawning, rainy, dark,  
When I saw a novel sight  
From my window toward the park—  
You'd been sitting there all night;  
Waiting for me down below,  
Soaking wet—but you were yawning.  
Never did I hate you so. . . .  
Day was dawning.

CHARLES BENNETT

### SPRING PLOUGHING

The wind is in the ploughboy's hair today.  
Yet often has it sung around his ears.  
The cherry blossom blooms upon the spray,  
As it has bloomed before; old hopes and fears  
Retell from day to day their timeless tale  
As freighted Earth dreams ever to the East  
"On her soft axel"; ships in passing hail  
And vanish; Death still watches at the feast.

## ILLINI POETRY

But now has come a stirring in the air—  
The secret, stealing life by ways unguessed  
Of sap and blood through every limb and bough;  
The ploughboy feels his young strength mounting  
    where  
The wind's firm kiss is on his body pressed  
While through the sleeping Earth he drives his  
    plough.

PELHAM BOX

### A VILLANELLE OF VALENTINES

Though countless delicate designs  
Have weilded charm, no one has writ  
A Villanelle of Valentines.

And countless ardent rhythmic lines  
Meander with a gracious wit  
Through countless delicate designs—

Ah, here a lovely lady pines  
For any gentleman who'd fit  
A Villanelle of Valentines;

And there a gallant beau reclines  
Whose heart his lady's will not quit  
Through countless delicate designs. —

## ILLINI POETRY

Still, none of these aright defines—  
There's but one thing that measures it—  
A Villanelle of Valentines.

For here is all the love that twines,  
And all the glistening words that flit  
Through countless delicate designs—  
A Villanelle of Valentines.

QUINCY GUY BURRIS

## SONNET

How slender now the store of days that went  
Unreckoned by, and left me solace-bare,  
Like burnished notes from out a secret quair,  
Their lustre vanished and their splendor spent.  
How many days since then do I lament  
The perishing of glamour everywhere,  
The absent troublous beauty to ensnare  
Or vex my thoughts with ardent discontent.

Ah me, is this the end of pleasuring?  
Shall one face passing gird me round with grief,  
Or one stilled hand put quiet on the earth?  
I had not thought to see the sundering  
Of joy from fields, or grace from falling leaf,  
And other beauty strangely nothing worth.

QUINCY GUY BURRIS

## ILLINI POETRY

### SONNET IN SPRING

There was no pleasure ever here, I thought,  
When I first saw his dry astringent face,  
And marked the brisk precision of his pace  
Around the cramped room, where the farmers  
bought  
His garish stuffs. And surely there was nought  
Of largeness or of gayness in the place—  
But such an air as might too well efface  
With phlegm a small soul insecurely caught.

But six months later, when the greening year  
Was whelmed in April, I again was there.  
I thought he had not changed much, till he said  
By way of greeting, "Well, sir, spring is here.  
That mist-green field a month ago was bare.  
And that leaved tree I would have sworn was  
dead."

QUINCY GUY BURRIS

### PLATO—ULTIMATE REALITY

Man calls that Beauty which is snared in roses,  
And Wisdom what is but a dream of knowing.  
Music for him is compassed in Pan's blowing  
A little sound he loves awhile, and loses.  
Music he hears is not what he supposes.  
The Real is ageless, and the sensuous glowing

## ILLINI POETRY

Wherewith man sees is all a flux and going—  
Light from a shuttered lamp, that flares and  
closes.

Plato, we are not builded for the wonder  
Of these high summits of untrammelled mind.  
We falter on this height, in this thin air,  
Where faint the Oracles of Wisdom thunder,  
Knowing we are too pitiably blind  
To look on Beauty, terrible and bare.

QUINCY GUY BURRIS

## SCARS

There is deep serenity in ugly things—  
Wood dark with age and scarred with daily  
wear,  
Coarse garments wet with rain, and clumsy  
mud-stained shoes,  
In faces marred with old forgotten care.

They have the strong plain breath of earthiness  
about them.  
Their feel is like the rough black bark of  
trees,  
That stand deep planted in the loam and know  
untroubled  
The crackling storm or sunlit drone of bees.

## ILLINI POETRY

Great souls there are who leap to flaming beauty  
In timeless wind-swept realms behind the  
stars,  
But we may know, who walk in homely places,  
The intimate serenity of scars.

GARRETA BUSEY

### THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

Not for the fragile pitcher you let fall  
I wept so stormily. But who could guess  
That under heaping years there was a hall  
Where heroes sat and feasted motionless.

On its wide hearth the great oak logs were  
crowned  
With flames brittle as glass; for mute applause  
A silent minstrel sang; a ragged hound  
Gnawed his bone hungrily, with frozen jaws.

The pitcher fell, through time, and as it crashed,  
The great hall sprang to life; the torches leapt,  
The harp was quick with music, metal clashed  
And voices rang. Hearing one voice, I wept.

And the great logs, fire-bitten, fell apart  
And were consumed, smouldering, in my heart.

GARRETA BUSEY

## ILLINI POETRY

### VILLANELLE

The Villanelle is my despair.  
Its subtle trick eludes me quite.  
Still would I please my lady fair.

Her joyous heart is free from care.  
Its tripping verse is her delight.  
The Villanelle is my despair.

The sun makes bronze gleams in her hair.  
In shade her locks are black as night.  
Still would I please my lady fair.

I love to see the sunlight there.  
She does not know, the happy sprite,  
The Villanelle is my despair.

The fairy threads are silken where  
The sunshine makes its bronzes bright.  
Still would I please my lady fair.

We'll always be a happy pair  
If I can make this verse end right.  
The Villanelle is my despair.  
Still would I please my lady fair.

HARRISON E. CUNNINGHAM



## ILLINI POETRY

### NO NIGHTINGALE

All day long—  
With my eyes on the ground—  
I have been thinking of shadows.  
What they are.  
Just now—across the grass—  
A tiny one ran, fluttering.  
I would not lift my head.  
I would not look up.  
“It is not a nightingale”  
I thought sullenly,  
“It is not a nightingale, nor a lark, nor a thrush,  
It is only a sparrow!”  
I am so wise.  
I know it is the season for sparrows.  
But God—I am young.  
This ought to be my season  
For seeing even the shadows of sparrows  
As nightingales!

MARJORIE DOOLEY

### CLOUDY NIGHT

As a boy with a spoon  
Only frets at his pudding and tries to uncover a  
    plum,  
So the wind for the moon

## ILLINI POETRY

Slyly fumbles a cloud with a covetous finger and thumb.

Then a swift silver ray,  
Like a boy's uninflected soprano, unsubtle and sweet  
Lights two lovers, and they,  
As one shadow, sway into the shade, on a shadowy street.

MARJORIE DOOLEY

### TO A YOUNG ORGANIST

It was of you I dreamed  
Of you I wove my spinning fantasies,  
And on your wavering shadow pinned my heart.  
So insecure a rest! How breathlessly  
We followed—doubled—danced—my heart  
and I,  
With your unstable shade. And then, at last,  
I stamped my foot and snatched my tired heart  
And pinned it—where I mean that it shall stay—  
Upon the coat-tails of a solid man!

MARJORIE DOOLEY

### TIME

There is no rest! No tiniest point of time  
To lean our hearts upon. The while we say

## ILLINI POETRY

We love, love flows beyond us. Swift away  
The lovely instant fades. The rose, the rhyme,  
The kiss, the hushed and cool ecstatic breath  
Of violets desert each tranced sense  
And leave us empty, lost. No "present tense"  
Survives our school days. Shall we find that  
death

Is no more stable? In some glorious hour  
What if we cry "we live!" "we live!" and find  
Life flowing, flown? And if we say "we die"  
Shall Death too pass? Time, sullen, dour,  
Is he outreached at last? What if behind  
And thru the pilfering moment our lost treasures lie?

MARJORIE DOOLEY

## MIDNIGHT FANTASY

Cupped  
dark  
star-sown sky  
over the lake,  
curved in the lake.  
Stars are as deep as the stars are high,  
a hollow ball for a god to take  
(or a god's child)  
to seize and shake  
till the hot

## ILLINI POETRY

blue  
sputtering  
wild  
stars sink with a hissing sigh  
into the lake,  
and the fishes fly,  
firmly protesting,  
into the sky!

MARJORIE DOOLEY

### NIGHT IS A DARK-HAIRED POET

Night is a dark-haired poet,  
And he's in love with Day.  
While the shining Sun that stands between  
Keeps them apart alway.

Sometimes in the evening twilight,  
Sometimes in the morning dew,  
While twilight shadows linger long,  
They meet, these lovers true.

And folded then in close embrace,  
They watch the moments glide  
Into Eternity, and for the time  
Forget all else beside.

So lingering is this stolen kiss,  
One cannot well decide

## ILLINI POETRY

Which is the dusky lover,  
And which the shining bride.

This dusky twilight which we call  
Love, or some name as slight,  
Is still not light, but lustrous dark,  
Not dark, but secret light.

C. H. DYKEMA

### JUNGLE TAILS

I hymn the Hippopotamus, a beast devoid of  
    grace  
For when he opens up his mouth, he hasn't any  
    face.

Observe the plaintive hoppergrass, the insect  
    rates a wreath;  
He shows how really tough he is by spitting  
    through his teeth.

Behold the grunting porker; of woe he sips the  
    dregs  
When he gets nice and fat he'll be a half of  
    ham and eggs.

The crayfish is an awkward beast and yet he's  
    very wise

*ILLINI POETRY*

He travels backward so that sand can't get into  
his eyes.

I celebrate the youthful fish, immune from par-  
ent's wrath  
No matter how he romps and plays, he doesn't  
need a bath.

Behold the wee mosquito, the crazy little clown.  
He digs a hole and from it grows a dimple, up-  
side down.

Perceive, I pray, the hobby horse, his head is  
made of wood  
But then he doesn't give a whoop and wouldn't  
if he could.

Observe the hard-boiled saw fish; he's crazy I  
suppose  
For otherwise why should he wear his teeth  
upon his nose?

Pray lamp the patient elephant, the hero of this  
rhyme.  
He takes no chance of choking on a peanut at  
a time.

DAVID V. FELTS

## ILLINI POETRY

### CONSERVATION

I never yearned to freeze my nose and chase the  
wily moose,  
Such tramps abroad to me seem awfully useless  
and abstruse.  
No moose will ever have a chance to paw the  
buttons off my pants  
Unless the nuts within my dome start slipping  
and work loose.

Let others decorate their halls with trophies of  
the chase.  
I'll view the antlers with no sign of envy on my  
face.  
I'd rather stalk the simple bat, the sparrow or  
the neighbor's cat—  
I must preserve my talents for the glory of the  
race.

DAVID V. FELTS

### SPRING SOWING

Four figures moving back and forth across  
A narrowed hill—two horses and two men;  
And all about them earth and air and sky  
Filled with a joyous portent. Clouds career  
The windy vault of heaven, high and blue.

ILLINI POETRY

There is a great to do among the trees,  
A twitter and a whistling and a stir;  
And where the four have passed birds swoop to  
    glean  
The seed that is not swallowed by the soil—  
The eager, silent soil pressed by their feet.

Stately and slow like steeds upon a frieze  
Move the strong horses, rounding neck and neck.  
The seed-box, long, bright red, on yellow wheels,  
Is like a toy. "They're much too fat" says man  
To man. The other grunts, "What they need  
    now  
Is work." And both plod on in silence down  
The furrowed field, and drop their seed, and  
    turn,  
And one clucks "Gee!" the other flaps the rein,  
The seed-box clicks and creaks and swings  
    about,  
And up the slope the horses step again.

Four figures stand against the sky that hangs  
Over the hill, the house, the barn, and curves  
To where the shimmering of sunny air  
Disturbs the calm horizon. "It won't rain  
Tonight," says one; "they'll be a moon. I guess  
That gal will be a-wantin' me to spoon.



## ILLINI POETRY

I never saw the like . . ." The other spat,  
"All o' creation's warm this time o' year—  
Git-op!" The horses rear and bob their heads;  
Seeds begin dropping to the waiting earth.

IRVING FINEMAN

### OUR OVERLORD

Death is a fine old lord, who keeps a castle;  
His serfs we are, keeping his hedges trim—  
Yet he is kind, for every man, his vassal,  
He lets just once come up and sup with him.

RICHMOND FOWLER

### OLD THUNDER

The thunder is old—how old, we know,  
Who hear it come tottering over the skies  
Crippled and broken and weary and wise;  
The thunder knows how to go slow . . . go slow.

RICHMOND FOWLER

### THE PRINCELING

Three horsemen rode across the plain.  
And wherefore did they ride  
Black-cloaked and brooding, through the shadow  
Of the mountain-side?

## ILLINI POETRY

And one was swarth. He spake no word,  
But rode in calmness grim.  
And one was pale. He wet his lips,  
And shook in every limb.

And one was such a golden child—  
You'd almost laugh to see  
How droll the black cloak looked against  
His rich embroidery.

Three horsemen rode across the plain,  
And crossed the mountains blue—  
And when again the sun came up,  
Back on the plain rode two.

RICHMOND FOWLER

### PRIDE

They are not proud, who rightfully inherit  
The qualities of true nobility—  
They do not even realize their merit,  
Though proud their manner seems, to those  
who see.

They go unconscious of their regal bearing,  
Not knowing pride in small and jealous  
things.  
Think you the eagle through the heavens faring  
Is proud that he has wings?

RICHMOND FOWLER

ILLINI POETRY

BALLADE OF MARCH WINDS

Out of the Caves of Time once more,  
Giant, bat-winged, the March winds go:  
High in the darkness they flap and roar—  
Over the house-tops, peaked and low—  
Down in the streets, where to and fro  
They bang the shutters of inn and store!  
These are the mad winds! Hear them blow  
Where snow but lately went before.

Bat-wings beat on the kitchen door!  
Giants bluster a merry ho!  
Drunk with the liquors that freshets pour—  
Quaffing the sap that begins to flow,  
Gaily they roister, and drunker grow!  
Brawling and bawling, they pay no score;  
Theirs is wise madness, for they know  
Where snow but lately went before.

They that have wrestled with Winter hoar,  
They that achieved his overthrow,  
Know that they soon must turn and soar  
Back on wings that grow weak and slow—  
Back to the Caves of Time, although  
Now they are strong; so they rollick o'er  
Fields that the peasants soon will sow,  
Where snow but lately went before.

## ILLINI POETRY

L'envoi:

Giants, before we plant and mow,  
You must sweep clean the earth's broad floor;  
Driving before your wings the snow  
Where snow but lately went before.

RICHMOND FOWLER

### GRAMMATIC ROMANCE

There once was a young preposition,  
And handsome, indeed, was he.  
He loved a gay verb of condition,  
And love her infinitively.

She seemed to be in agreement  
With his matrimonial mood;  
They quickly decided to cement  
The love with which both were imbued.

The wedding was held, and the function  
Drew all of the very best parts  
Of speech, to assist the conjunction  
Of two such reflexive young hearts.

After their grand conjugation  
They went into Woolley's to live.  
Their joy was of high derivation;  
They swore it was intransitive.

But hist! Came a handsome young adverb  
With an indirect object in view—

## ILLINI POETRY

He seduced the good verb to a bad verb,  
And thus separated the two.

So were the two put asunder,  
And split was infinitive glee;  
The husband, to everyone's wonder,  
Received the sad news passively.

The young preposition explained it:  
"I'd got pretty sick of my choice.  
My love had been strong, but she strained it  
By having too active a voice."

RICHMOND FOWLER

## SAINT GREGORY

God gave the good Saint Gregory  
The Fisher's seat to hold with power,  
And to its pomp of fief and fee  
(That even saints keep but an hour)  
Joined of most holy poesie  
The fragrant and perennial flower.

So in his book we still may read  
How Benedict long walked with God  
In sanctity of thought and deed,  
Keeping the way his Master trod,  
Seeking on earth no other meed  
Than the thorny crown and scourger's rod.

## ILLINI POETRY

Learn, too, we may, how once of old  
A horse who'd borne the weight of Rome  
In no uncertain language told  
His mistress he'd not stir from home—  
How a good bear brought sheep to fold,  
And iron floated light as foam.

So highest truths that faith can teach  
Mingling with legends strange and quaint,  
That in the peasant's fireside speech  
Add to the glory of a saint,  
Drew within shortest human reach,  
A vision else too far and faint.

MARCUS SELDEN GOLDMAN

*The Commonweal*

### CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE

No longer on the famed bridge of Avignon  
Do youths and maidens dance in happy ring;  
No longer up the long streets to the palace  
Marching in joyous file the choir boys sing.

No longer hung with cloth of gold and purple  
St. Peter's barge rides anchor in the Rhone;  
Lonely amid the sad cathedral shadows,  
Forever empty waits his Roman throne.

No longer clad in scarlet, sheathed in armor,  
Half priest, half soldier, 'mong the men at arms,

## ILLINI POETRY

Through the rich Comtat rides the cardinal-  
legate  
When out of Languedoc sound war's alarms.

No Petrarch paces now Avignon's gardens ;  
Ruined the cloisters, fallen the lofty spires,  
Forgotten now are Aquaviva's splendors ;  
On tower and bastion burn no beacon fires.

The saints are broken, effaced the keys of Peter ;  
The three word lie is painted on the wall  
Of many an ancient church and hoary palace,  
Tottering through slow years to a final fall.

All perish, church and crenellated casement  
Decay beyond renewing ; on their crags  
The palace and the Fortress of St. Andre  
Shall know no more the pride of festal flags.

Of all old pomps and of all ancient riches  
But one remains, yet that one holds them all ;  
At Chateauneuf still grow the papal vineyards  
Green in the shadow of the crumbling wall.

The popes are gone, but still the papal vintage  
Remains red, rich, and heady as of old,  
A wine of fire, of roses, and of velvet,  
Meet to be drunk from cups of massive gold.

## ILLINI POETRY

In it still live the old Venaissin glories  
They come again upon its crimson flood,  
Back to Avignon from the realms of legend  
While there begins a singing in the blood.

But three full goblets and above the city  
Rises the bright sun of the Renaissance,  
And the sad chef-lieu of the Vaucluse changing  
Becomes the world's shrine and the soul of  
France.

MARCUS SELDEN GOLDMAN

### ON RECEIVING A CIGARETTE BOX OF PINK CARRARA

"It's meant for cigarettes," my Dear, you say?  
Cypris forbid that I should answer, "Nay."  
Yet though I cherish my tobacco well,  
I deck it not with rose and asphodel.  
Ah, nicotine is too ethereal  
For chest of marble so funereal!

This were, indeed, a resting place more meet  
For lifeless pet lost to all dalliance sweet.  
Here Lesbia's pampered sparrow might recline,  
After his dear day's ultimate decline,  
And his light singing soul had winged afar  
To those bright fields where birds immortal are,



## ILLINI POETRY

With that long fable parrot, whose clear voice  
Once made Corinna's faithless heart rejoice,  
And him whom Statius *dux volucrum* named,  
Their peer in honor through the ages famed.  
Ah one had laid him tenderly away  
'Neath wreaths unfading, laurel mixed with bay,  
Symbol of song that claimed his latest breath,  
And high renown triumphant over death.  
In this fair casket wrought of rosy stone  
He had not seemed, though pitifully alone  
With curled, cold toes and closely folded wings,  
Lost to the world of precious, little things.

But ladies' gifts admit of no demur:  
My cigarettes must here find sepulchre.  
And, after all, in this pink, narrow room  
We have no Lesbia's sparrow to entomb.  
MARCUS SELDEN GOLDMAN

### TRIAD

The trees are gold in the late slant sun.  
The leaves are falling, one by one.  
We watch the lanes where the shadows run,  
And laugh at the fright they feign.

But beauty fades with the western glow,  
And winter strangles these woods we know.

*ILLINI POETRY*

The nights have come when the black won't go—  
After the laughter—pain.

A slim dawn pierces the somber sky  
And grows to a vivid, eternal cry.  
We face the sunrise, you and I,  
And drink of our joy again.

JON GUENTHER

SONG FOR A WINTER EVENING

Blue clouds, blue ships,  
Sailing the golden sky,  
Winter winds have caught your sails  
And you must hurry by.

Strange clouds, strange ships,  
Pirate ships of the sun,  
Buccaneers crowd your rails  
And watch the night come on.

Day dies, blue ships—  
Aye, the dark beats down  
To sink you deep in the sea of night  
Ere you can sack the town.

JON GUENTHER

## ILLINI POETRY

### THE DARK MERE OF LOCMARIOQUIER

Locmarioquier, long lost to the voice calling,  
Sought forever and aye, and the rain falling  
Over the dark hills, and the voice crying  
Mournful over the sea, where the gull flying  
Goes like a gray ghost, and over the mere  
Crying comes the lone voice. Locmarioquier,  
Never the sun, never the blue and the gold  
Sky over the darkness, over the cold  
Swamps at sea-edge, rank with the flung spume  
Out of the sea. Locmarioquier, the doom!  
This the lone sea and the lost land!—  
And the questing voice goes, and a great hand  
Settles unseen, like a cloud, like a slow breath,  
And Death walks in the dark hills—Death  
Sings in the rain, looms on the hill's crest,  
Far and shapeless and black in the gray west.  
The voice hearing, the voice knowing the fear,  
And stealing cold as the mist over the mere  
Where the gull flies, the gray ghost winging  
Out to sea—and Death on the hill is singing.

JON GUENTHER

AS THE SHADOWS ENTER A ROOM  
And how shall I presume?—  
It was only that you were very near

## ILLINI POETRY

And unforgettably dear  
In the swift days, in the inescapable doom  
Of that forever unforgettable year.

If only because you came and put forth your  
    hand  
And strongly stood at the wheel  
Of my ship of most inexorable circumstance,  
So that the keel  
Swung on the swift tide to the safe land,  
I have forgotten the dread sea-gloom  
And how it was written that you should go as  
    you came—  
As the sun comes, and the sun goes, and the  
    shadows  
Enter a room.

JON GUENTHER

### CHAUCEUR

Seeing thee pass, we too have laid away  
Pale trappings of a wisdom long outworn,  
Renounced a muse too wan and cloister-lorn,  
To follow thee, impenitently gay.  
Now we would learn to know thy brighter day,  
To find with thee the full, high bloom of earth,  
To rouse the rafters with robustious mirth,  
And at thy leaf-blown altar pause to pray.  
Aye, for the laughter of full-throated men,

## ILLINI POETRY

The clink of cups, the swords of heroes drawn,  
Linger to monument thy fallen pen,  
Linger behind thy pilgrims' passing on.—  
Life and thy smile, through generations gone,—  
Death,—and an April song is clear again!

ROBERT HENDERSON

### PALEOLOGUS—1453

Unhappy hour, long night of futile tears,  
The knell of Empire rings beneath thy stars.  
The torches gutter and the watchfires gleam,  
A noise of hosts is on the wakeful plain,  
The wind is heavy with an army's tread,—  
An army biding Allah and the dawn.

O lances of the West,—bright, biting steel  
Of English swords,—Richard and Vermandois!  
O Venice of the waters, Genoa,  
Is there no one among thee to fulfill  
The promise of thy faith of yesterday?  
O Rome imperial, doth Tiber bathe  
The feet of one forsworn? O hollow tomb,  
That hath been mother of all Christendom!

Thee I loved well, Byzantium, thee I loved  
Through all the golden years, the prideful years,  
Aye, and through sunset, through the paling  
hours

## ILLINI POETRY

When thy tear-sparkling laughter gallantly  
Bade its adieu to thy declining day.  
My sword is thine, Byzantium, and my blood  
Is bartered for a moment of thy life,—  
Giving thee grace to perish fittingly,  
To flaunt thy banners bravely, once again.—  
These are for thee, my city. If the heart  
That proffers them withhold its fullest zeal,  
Think not it loves thee less than very life.  
Think only that it yearns to die with thee.  
For I am weary of the turmoiled years,  
Weary of bitterness and cankered spite,—  
Imperial and forlorn, uncomforted,  
Yet if thou livest, I must live for thee.

Sancta Sophia, be thy sacred calm  
My peace, my refuge and my sepulchre.  
Sancta Sophia, be thy solitude  
My harbor and my long-abiding place.  
Sancta Sophia, be thy lofty groins  
My strength of hand, the courage of my soul.  
Sancta Sophia, be thy vesper bell  
The last, clear purpose of a fallen king.  
Be to me now the summons valorous,  
Tomorrow be an Empire's requiem!

Enough! The dawn awakes. Brave gentlemen,  
Byzantium hath need of thy good swords.

## ILLINI POETRY

— A few we are,—great-hearted, strong of will,—  
Once more thy hand, thy smile,—then gallantly  
Die with Byzantium, Christ and Constantine!

ROBERT HENDERSON

### FALSTAFF RETURNS

Another, yet another,—let me drown  
In a vast flagon, spilling its red wine!  
Capon and venison, and a comely wench,  
And I will jest away the last, long hour.  
What matter if the silly candle burn  
And gutter yellowly?—if its flame die?—  
What matter if chill winter's trumpeting  
Beleaguer loud the groaning tavern door?  
I am within. What matter if grey ash  
Have lain in desolation on its hearth  
This score of years?—My wine is plentiful.—  
It is a sack will keep me warm, and too,  
Methinks there is a glow in memory.

They know not how to live, these mincing mites  
Who dine with prudence and who sup with care.  
They drink in thimbles, and betimes they feast  
In courtliest carouse, politest rout  
That ever lusty fellow laughed upon.  
Fill up the bowl, good mistress! What?—  
Away?—

## ILLINI POETRY

Well, filled to myself, and drunk unto mineself,  
And bottom to the rafters and the moon!  
Yea, I have seen them all,—Peto and Poins,  
Gadshill to set a match and take a purse,  
Aye, and mad Hal to sing the stars to shame,—

Hal! And 'twas not "His Majesty" who rode  
Tavern to tavern, inn to merry inn,  
And cursed me for a pudding-belted knave,  
And bought me wine! Another, mistress,—  
    come—  
The candle burneth low, and I would drink  
To drown it out.

How, Bardolph, thou?  
And doth thy solemn ghost come wandering  
To shout the watch with Falstaff? Ho! A bowl  
For Bardolph,—and we two shall make  
A phantom festival will bring a blush  
To puny flesh and blood!—Doth Lucifer  
Advantage him of thy bright beacon-flame?  
Methinks his brimstone should be paled by it!  
Mark you the foolish clock,—he holds his hands  
In horror to his face for that he sees  
What hath not been these many, dreary years.  
"And ghosts, too!" saith he,—aye, and spirits  
    hale  
As ever this old tavern saw alive!



## ILLINI POETRY

The night is fleet, Bardolph, the candle dims,  
And flickers on the dust and mould'ring wall,  
And makes the mocking shadows leap at us  
To catch us in their all-enshrouding black.  
The muffled bell of midnight tolls, the wind  
Summons beyond the shutter mournfully,  
And knocks like some cold courier of the realm  
Of Asphodel and darkness.—Once again,  
Or ere the dying hour be told away,—  
Roundly we lived, and sith we live again,  
Let us as roundly die! A gasping flame  
Still flickers. Drain thy flagon! Let a song  
Go roaring out to greet the fiends! Once more  
A long, long drink,—then leave us yet a breath  
To puff the futile candle ere his time!

ROBERT HENDERSON

### THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

(ROUEN—1431)

This girl will bear a watch—the first of you  
Napping beside the door, will find his rest  
Not to his liking.—I'm for the kitchen fire.  
I like not pacing past a witch's door,  
And shivering with something more than cold;  
So if some bloodless ghost come rescue-bent  
Stab steel into the flesh that is no flesh,

## ILLINI POETRY

And say that she will join him with the dawn.  
God save you from the fiend! I'll drink him off!

There was a time I would have set that stake,  
And thought it nothing strange to touch the fire,  
And see flames forking upward, as they were  
Red devil hands, impatient for their prey.  
A man is but a man,—why there you sit,  
I cut you down,—the world fares none the  
worse,—

More bread to fill the others,—one less rogue  
To rob the peasants when the wars are done  
And no great weeping for you, — but a  
woman!—

The more fool she, to hear her own hens cluck-  
ing,  
And think them holy voices!—Well, she'll  
burn.

I'd set the fire were she ten thousand witches.  
Or one poor girl.—I have a debt in heaven;—  
At dawn I'll send good payment coiling up  
To be a candle for my soul's reward!  
Witches must burn!

And yet, I do not like it.  
She prays too much, and hers is not the prayer  
Of one who dies in agony and shame.  
She begs no mercy for such loathesome sin

## ILLINI POETRY

As that she dies for. Once in the night she  
wept

A very little, "Give me of thy strength!"

And said, "Only forgive that ever I

Should falter. Pity me! Didst not thy heart  
Tell thee but once that life was sweet?—not  
once?

But had thine eyes seen France? Alas, thy  
sight

Was fixed on heaven, mine on the grass-green  
hills!"

Call that a witch's prayer! Yes, I have stood

A-tremble by the grating of her door,

Waiting to hear some chanting sorcery,

Or see hell's lightning shiver through the  
wall,—

And I have heard one tired and lonely girl,

Who stood there, gazing up beyond the stars,

Begging some saint that he should not forsake  
her,

As if he were, indeed, the king of France!

Aye! And if that same puny king were here

And she on his high seat, it were more fitting!

Why I would send him screaming up to God

In a royal blaze, and speed him there with  
curses!

Witchcraft, forsooth! What woman's not a  
witch?

## ILLINI POETRY

I take her food you would not give your hounds,  
And she will smile such thanks that I could weep  
For very rage, fall down and beg her grace!  
I say no word, but bang the bolts in place,  
And that tremendous loud!

Another bowl!  
More wine to thicken the blood—the night is  
cold—  
Mark you—when men are brave, they let them  
fight.  
They call a woman witch, and truss her up,  
And roast her for the glory of the Lord!  
I know not what the will of heaven be,  
I am not one to mock at holiness,  
But if these noble kings, these bald-pate priests  
Who drone their masses with their tongues in  
cheek  
Had seen what I have seen—had watched that  
girl,  
Patient, clasping the bars that hold her here,  
While her great eyes go searching through the  
night  
For the very saints themselves, who will not  
see . . . !  
Maudlin? Not I! Blasphemy? There's a word  
To reckon with! I crave your best discretion.  
Let us go out—the air is better there.

## ILLINI POETRY

I have not slept tonight, but drunk too deep.  
Wine twists the tongue most strangely, and I  
spoke  
Thoughts not my own.—And now the dawn is  
here—  
They stir above—I'm very tired—and too—  
I drank much wine—last evening by the fire.

They burn a witch today—I burn a witch.—  
A woman fighting for the King of France—  
So very queer—I want to sleep—it seems  
I did sleep—and I dreamed—unholy dreams—  
Give me your arm—thank you—I walk quite  
well—

Is it not pious thus to burn a witch?

ROBERT HENDERSON

## PYGMALION AND GALATEA

White sand and water green, long serpent lines  
Of white foam hissing on the Cyprian shore,  
And a sea-nymph with malice in her heart,  
And one poor, prudent king, walking alone,—  
Thinking, perhaps, that he did not too ill  
His royal task, thinking that he was kind,  
And led his life of virtue blamelessly,—  
And as he wandered, thinking not at all  
That on the lee of yon lone, jutting rock,

ILLINI POETRY

Tranquility might drown in arms as white  
As though they had been pure.

There was the nymph,—  
She knew him for a king, and made her bow,  
She knew him for a man, and flattered him  
As any king or man would have her do,  
Making him great with splendor not his own,  
Giving him pride of might that tokened more  
Than mere contentment, born of quiet days.  
And then she spoke to him as one who knew,  
Perchance, of love,—(as she herself did not)—  
Besought him that he would relate some tale  
Of tenderness,—the place befitted such,—  
The twilight often moved her so,—would the  
king  
Please to be rested here, upon the rock?  
She knew a song,—strange,—from a distant  
land,—  
Plaintive and amorous beneath the dusk.—

Pygmalion bethought him that her hair  
Most curiously had caught the setting sun,  
And that her eyes knew something of the green  
Of the deep sea, feigning a twilight calm,  
And that her breast was white.—Pygmalion  
Most righteously was angered with the nymph  
For seeming lovely to a good man's eyes,

## ILLINI POETRY

Making a sober monarch's evening stroll  
On his own beach, appear a time of pleasure,  
Bade her begone, and straightway took himself  
Home to the safety of his chamber walls,  
And lay, wide eyed, through all the limpid night.  
He saw her face look laughing from the moon,  
He watched her dancing on the silvered floor  
With feet of silver light,—her fingers strayed,  
And like the night wind, toyed about his hair  
With some strange sorcery,—delightful guile.

He thought he could not love, and yet he lay  
As a bewildered child, who happening  
To stumble, half afraid, on fairyland,—  
Knowing that he had found the end of quest-  
ing,—

Knew also that no grimy little boys  
Ever came back from that far, elfin home  
To make mud pies contentedly once more.  
Then tremblingly the king arose to bar  
That mocking moon and her pale votary  
Who set him mad with dancing down her beams.  
It seemed that there was laughter in the light,  
And whispers in the shadows of his trees,  
And singing in the silver fountain-spray.  
And the king knew that he should not again  
Be happy in the solitude of nights,  
Watching the mad moon-shadows on his wall.

## ILLINI POETRY

There was a longing in his kingly soul  
For some high-hearted love,—and yet he feared.  
He would have had a wife to understand  
How truly fine his spirit was,—to know  
That he could love as well as any man  
When in his mood,—and still he was afraid.  
He thought that if he could but make a wife,  
He might be rather happy by her side  
Of moonlit nights,—and wondered if he would.

Then when the morning came, Pygmalion  
Set out to make of ivory a maid  
As fair as Galatea,—one who should  
Not quite so wantonly disturb his dreams,  
One who should bear her image perfectly,  
But better suited to a quiet man.  
Day after day he labored, thinking still  
Of sea-wet limbs, white, on a black sea-rock,  
And of the moonlight, slanting down his  
    room,—  
Wind in his hair—.

He was content again,  
And found his art worthy an artist's praise,  
Admired aloud his craft and cleverness,—  
“There is a charm about a chiselled wife,  
About a spouse that's carven to the taste,  
Filed to the fancy, polished, tinted,—aye,



## ILLINI POETRY

And silent!—'tis a thing unique in wives.  
For no man finds perfection save where he  
Himself creates it,—there is nothing good  
To man but man, and that which man has made.  
These wives are an Olympian revenge,  
Divinely shaped, without divinity,  
Since ever Zeus proved sculptor, and a maid,—  
That first enchanting and seductive clay,—  
Lifted a box-lid! Let us take revenge  
On vengeance.—There's an eyebrow there might  
lift

A trifle more,—that's hauteur,—but you'll note  
The head's demurely turned,—a lash might  
brush

Upon this cheek with more humility  
Than any god-made woman could display  
Except she looked obedience by design,  
Or languished to a purpose. That same nymph  
Invites less sweetly with red, wanton lips  
Than she whose smile is coral,—nay, her arms,  
Her eager arms, that glisten from the waves  
Gleam not so white as these, her hands that flash,  
Gemmed with the sea, were never half so cool,  
Nor ever folded in such mild repose.  
I think a wife of ivory were best  
For men who set a store by sanity,  
Or for an artist who should love his art

## ILLINI POETRY

And have his own mind to bestow on it,  
Or for philosophers who must pretend  
To understand most things beneath the stars,  
But not a woman.

I'm a man who knows  
Somewhat of art, and, yes,—philosophy.  
I've seen Anaximander in my youth,  
And all my people praise my chiselling,—  
And I am king of Cyprus,—that's the net  
The nymph was caught in—trust a woman's eye  
To see the sparkle of a little gold,  
Whether it bands the temples of a man,  
Or wears his likeness on a polished face,—  
It matters not.—She smiled, I shrugged, she  
pouted,  
And then I went my way, very aloof,  
Most unperturbed, despite the laugh I fancied  
Might ring of mockery,—or likelier  
Of some fine scheme I thwarted, — she's a  
woman!"

He paused, regarding her, this mistress mute,  
This calm divinity, whose smile bespoke  
No thought that might disturb a monarch's  
peace,  
Whose eyes were lit with such sweet vacancy  
That it was plain she'd be the best of wives,

## ILLINI POETRY

And won without the wooing,—such a queen  
As timid kings might cherish,—for her hands  
Were made to move the melodies of lyres,  
Or artfully to weave, or to caress  
A man's brow, tired with man's pretentious  
game

Of playing pilot to the universe.  
Her ears were made obedient to hear  
How artists are misunderstood, and how  
Her husband loves her,—when he thinks of it.  
Her lips were made for pleasant flattery  
Of a wifely sort,—yes, and for kissing, too,  
At night and morning, and content with that.  
She was as lovely as her counterpart  
That dwelt among the caverns of the sea.  
She shared the safeguard of a righteous roof,  
She was not made to dream, nor know desire,—  
It needs a subtle art to fashion souls!

Pygmalion, whose hands wrought skillfully,  
Looked on her and was pleased, nor found a  
fault

With such a mistress, feeling quite secure  
When left alone with only ivory  
In his dim-lighted chamber. Once when the  
lamp

Made mimic shadows caper down the wall,  
And lurk and leap in corners, mockingly,

## ILLINI POETRY

He thought her eyelid flickered, or her chin  
Tilted a bit coquettishly,—he swore  
He'd never made her lip curve so.—He started,  
Snuffed out the light, and hastily retired,  
And next night set the lamp most cautiously  
Elsewhere,—then moved it back again, and  
waited  
Long past the hour of slumber, for her smile.

ROBERT HENDERSON

### AT THE CUSTOMS

What am I bringing home you say?  
Let me see!  
The golden shawl was yet in the loom  
On the island of Capri.  
The two bronze griffins in Japan  
I could not hope to carry,  
The marble Magdalen in Rome,  
The little green canary,  
The German sampler worked in runes,  
The canvas with the breathless sky,  
The cuckoo-clock with the gay Swiss tunes,  
Were all too high!  
What am I bringing home you say?  
Just small things!  
A strand or two of coral beads  
And a silver ring.

## ILLINI POETRY

The painted vase from Venice  
Was broken in the crating;  
The pom-pom Turkish slippers  
I lost by hesitating.  
The wooden shoes from the Zuyder-Zee,  
The dagger-hilt from old Coblenz,  
The bottle of French Fleur-d-Leis  
I sent ahead to friends.  
What am I bringing home you 'say?  
Nothing but what will be duty-free—  
A kiss and a note from a boy on the boat,  
And a great white shell from the sea.

NIGEL HILL HERRICK

## LEAVES

### I

I hate the people walking in the street  
When hazy shadows thicken 'neath the trees,  
I hate the sound of careless, shuffled feet,  
When I would listen to the falling leaves.  
I hate the strollers in the twilight mist,  
Who linger in the drifting yellow rain  
To chatter noisily, and scatter wide  
The gleaming, golden heaps in rude disdain.  
But most of all, when sunset fairies splash  
The boughs with tints a mortal scarce conceives,

## ILLINI POETRY

I hate the hand that sets man's lights aglow,  
And steals the glory of the painted leaves.

### II

The wise men, Lord, brought treasured per-  
fumes sweet,  
For they were men of wealth and affluence,  
And laid their gifts of homage at your feet,  
The precious myrrh, the fragrant frankincense;  
And I, too, Lord, my soul enraptured with  
The color-mingled miracle of fall,  
In joyous gratitude and love, would bring  
My gift, to the creator of it all;  
Yet riches have I none. A single tree  
Of living gold beside my doorstep grows,  
And sends its showered wealth in dancing glee  
To deck the earth with every breeze that blows.  
I pile it high—a mass of shining bronze,  
The leaping flame, a fitful pathway cleaves,  
And softly rises my small tribute, Lord,  
The incense of the burning, autumn leaves.

### III

We sat upon the stairs; 'twas intertwined  
With coppered branches; overhead a row  
Of bright balloons was floating, lights were dim,  
To muted strains the dancers glided slow.  
"I love you, dear," I heard you whisper soft,

## ILLINI POETRY

It did not please me and I shook my head,  
My restless fingers, tracing with a pin  
My name, upon a leaf of tarnished red.  
You said it did not matter—and you smiled,  
Your mocking eyes held not a sign of grief,  
We went to dance, I thought it all a joke,  
Until I saw you searching for that leaf.

NIGEL HILL HERRICK

### WINTER

A gaunt ghost comes  
To tread the stubbled prairie,  
To lash the huddled cattle  
And strip the walnut trees ;  
To moan among the timber-tops  
And wail beneath the bridges,  
To way-lay the weary water  
As it struggles toward the sea.  
A gaunt ghost comes—  
But my heart no longer heeds  
The sudden silence of the meadow,  
Or the milk-weed blowing wide,  
For, Oh, a grimmer phantom  
Do I meet at every turning,  
The ghost of him, departed,  
Who did in Spring abide.

NIGEL HILL HERRICK

## ILLINI POETRY

### TO A LATE SNOW

Heap about the feet of April,  
Beat against the breast of spring,  
Flay the fields that yearn to tender  
Gifts unto the violet-vender,  
Bruise the maple one day longer,  
Weigh the struggling robin's wing.

Heap about the feet of April,  
Let her not come pitcher-bearing,  
Running, stumbling, drunk with laughter,  
Slushing golden vintage after,  
Down the hill, across the valley,  
Drift her path, dismay her faring.

Heap about the feet of April  
Ere my mad heart can defend her,  
Ere my mad heart can adore her,  
Pile thine icy wall before her,  
Heap about the feet of April,  
Let me not surrender.

NIGEL HILL HERRICK

### HEARTBREAK

Heartbreak is such a little thing.  
It only means that I shall never fling  
Out to the skies songs that I used to sing.



## ILLINI POETRY

It only means that I will never care  
For loveliness in any lovely thing.  
It only means that I shall never dare  
To pause at dusk in this still room  
Lest I should turn and find you there.  
Ghost-like before me in the gloom.  
Ah, yes, it is a little thing . . .  
Days shrouded in stark emptiness,  
Nights weary with remembering . . .  
Why that is all that heartbreak is.

STEWART HOWE

### A CONCRETE SILO

I have seen beauty hovering  
Above a dogwood copse in spring  
As if a million wax-white doves  
Had halted on the wing.

And once I found a little wood  
So still in autumn's early cold,  
I feared she had been taken there  
And cast in gold.

But lately in a prairie dawn  
I glimpsed her as we hurried by,  
A shimmering shaft of pearl against  
A fading coral sky.

PAUL LANDIS

## ILLINI POETRY

Αἴθρη Πιτθῆος θυγάτηρ Κλυμένη τε βοῶπις

When Helen, wrapped in shining veils,  
And weeping with a sweet desire,  
Went down the streets of wide-wayed Troy,  
Braving the Trojans' ire;  
Two captive maidens by her side  
Walked to immortality—  
Aithre, daughter of Pittheos,  
And ox-eyed Clymene.

Daughters of kings and gods they were,  
Yet not for this through sundering years  
Their names are lovely as the bright  
Beauty of Helen's tears;  
But mindful of her loneliness,  
In times distraught and desolate,  
Sadly but fearlessly they walked  
With Beauty to the Skaean Gate.

PAUL LANDIS

## THOMAS HARDY

He turned upon this world of men and things  
And God himself the light of reason, white  
With noble fearlessness, and in the night  
Of sentiment and cowardice that clings  
About our minds, his brave imaginings  
Showed what we scarce dared look upon for  
fright:

## ILLINI POETRY

The momentary glory of the flight—  
The ultimate futility of wings.  
Yet still his ancient enemy obtains,  
For it is nature's way that where the light  
Is clearest, there the darkest shadows are.  
Truth but reveals what mystery remains;  
And men become grotesques against the glare  
Of bonfires blazing on the heath at night.

PAUL LANDIS

### BREAKABLE THINGS

Love and glass and the stem of a flower  
Are breakable things, and prudent men  
Are not beguiled by the toys of an hour,  
That break and may never be mended again.

Iron and wheat and the staid affection  
That grows from mutual gain and esteem—  
These are the stones for the safe erection  
Of a life that is something more than a dream.

If this be the truth without misgiving,  
What is the reason that life which springs  
From more than a dream is less than living,  
And beauty abides in breakable things?

PAUL LANDIS

## ILLINI POETRY

### LINES

On reflecting that whereas other poets have succeeded in  
writing very competently about spring, I seem  
to lack inspiration this April.

Swinburne with his Atalanta  
Took a most æsthetic fling  
At a preliminary canter  
Riding to the hounds of Spring.

'Twas a great day in the annals  
Of the muses, if you please,  
When Wordsworth shed his winter flannels  
And put on his B.V.D's.

Then the heart within him stirred.  
Penned he stanzas rich and juicy,  
All about the cuckoo bird  
And the witless maiden Lucy.

Blake went on a piping bat with  
Chanting mutton on the hoof.  
On a cloud he saw a brat with  
Something wrong beneath his roof.

Now the weather's getting vernal;  
Yet, whene'er I want to shout  
Stanzas that shall be eternal,  
What is there to write about?

## ILLINI POETRY

Cuckoos seem to dodge South Busey.  
All Spring lambs are on the table.  
Witless maidens aren't like Lucy.  
Hounds of Spring are but a fable.

Daffodils begin to peer.  
Every day I'm getting dumber.  
Well, Spring comes but once a year.  
Thank the Lord, 'twill soon be Summer.

RICHMOND A. LATTIMORE

### WE THREE

There are three men that are I,  
Imprisoned in the frame of me,  
And all shall die.

One shall die in a quiet bed,  
With a light above him ;  
And she whose shadow he had fled  
Shall be there to love him ;  
The broken body that is dead,  
And the ashes of him.

One shall die as a hero dies,  
With a chain of steel men to speed his going,  
And a tall blaze inflaming the skies,  
And a circle of cressets glowing

## ILLINI POETRY

About the body where it lies,  
And the long horns blowing.

And one shall pass by the gates of morning,  
In the brightening glow ;  
With a shaft from the curve of the sky adorning  
The water below ;  
Quiet, without a sound of mourning,  
The last to go.

*Voices*  
*Braithwaite's Anthology*

RICHMOND A. LATTIMORE

### SONNETS

#### I

Two slipped into the sky, a hollow vessel,  
And saw how, tipped along its curving rim  
A marble mortar with a silver pestle,  
It pounded up their lives, and from the brim  
Poured them, a potion crushed from rigid form,  
Reduced to elements of fire and air.  
They moved like swimmers drifting in a storm  
Out into unrulèd space, they knew not where.

We do not know what hand of will or matter  
Flung like quicksilver down the shining pole  
Their being, with an aim to sift and shatter

## ILLINI POETRY

The substance that still clung about the soul.  
We only know that stars stood by to see,  
Reduplicate in multiplicity.

### II

They saw, those two, where from a sea of æther,  
The long swell beat on planetary strands.  
They saw the moon, a broken shell ; beneath her  
Sprawled the wide earth, still flecked with astral  
bands.

And motion, dropping, left their flying feet.  
Unseen, they ripped across an airless void  
To where four stars, wrapped in a glimmering  
heat,  
Rolled slowly out to form a trapezoid.

Now down, now up along the cleft abysm  
Veered other worlds, swirling a wake of fire.  
The fluted ether made for them a prism  
Through which their sloping walls seemed tilted  
higher.

And asteroids revolved, to fall and climb  
Measured in spinning melodies of time.

### III

Locked on the burning axle of the wheel  
They saw the spokes shaft outward, fringed  
with flame.

## ILLINI POETRY

Cauterized by a fire they could not feel,  
They turned to see horizons still the same.  
Flung by some flutter of the universe,  
Whirled outward through a belt of frozen air,  
They struck the moving ocean, to immerse  
Star-beaten limbs, and quench their flaming  
hair.

So, out of strange mutations, out of light  
And time illimitable, skyey spaces,  
Once more terrestrial, glowing silver-white  
They move like dancers back into their places.  
And from the oubliette of earthly things  
Two beings cut the shadow, and have wings.

RICHMOND A. LATTIMORE

## LUCRETIVS

He saw the sunrise on the murmurous sea,  
The motion of the tempests that uncurled  
Their power against the mountains, mightily,  
Suns, planets, all the flame-encircled world:  
Then looked on man, the credulous and blind,  
And wrought to inward passion of despair  
Arose, drew back the curtains of the mind,  
And laid the spinning mechanism bare.

He saw, and there were storm clouds in his  
sight.



## ILLINI POETRY

He heard earth-music and was strong with wonder.

His mind was flooded with increasing light,  
And when he spoke he loosed a chain of thunder  
In lines that no less mightily rehearse  
The ponderous rhythm of the universe.

*Voices*

RICHMOND A. LATTIMORE

### CLYTAEMNESTRA

Hands delicate to soften and to slay  
Were hers who struck the captain of the ships  
With rending steel, when in too brave array  
He came to read a welcome on her lips.  
A white flame kindled slowly in her heart,  
Tempering her straining nerves to do a thing  
Stupendous and unholy, when by art  
And strength she slaughtered her gigantic king.

So, marble-limbed and whitely statuesque,  
As if some man had moulded into grace  
The rugged stone, she stood there while grotesque

Emotions weirdly played across her face.  
And pale before the threat of stones and rods  
She dared the flying thunder of the Gods.

RICHMOND A. LATTIMORE

## ILLINI POETRY

### CASSANDRA

She walked alone upon the battlements.  
Beneath the dawn the Grecian charioteers  
Yoked their swift horses. From the wakening  
tents

Rose a small tumult, and the twinkle of spears  
Seen faintly over the wide dew-gleaming plain.  
The men were making ready. Another day  
Slipped to the notch that she had seen in vain.  
She waited. There was nothing left to say.

She stood in the cold wind, and closed her eyes,  
And heard the crash of falling cities, saw  
The cringe of spear-torn flesh, the glint of skies  
Above strange galleys, and the reaching claw  
Of an axe curved above her throat. The fated  
Armies of Troy went forth. She stood and  
waited.

RICHMOND A. LATTIMORE

### UNIMPORTUNATE

She, at least, will ask no sonnets of me,  
But only smile and take my words instead;  
And she would still believe in me and love me  
Though all the poetry of earth were dead.  
Though songs that I might sing would be for-  
gotten,

## ILLINI POETRY

She, at least, would not upbraid and sigh,  
Thinking of the joys that are begotten  
Of a little love, before we come to die.

Thus, making no pretense, no idle chatter  
Of my fair phrases, mouthed so many times,  
She knows that they will never really matter,  
And loves me for myself, not for my rhymes,  
Closing my mouth with kisses, lest I break  
Into a lovelier sonnet, for her sake.

L. R. LIND

### SENEX

When I can look at life and love it more  
For what I give than what it gives to me,  
Dreaming of what has nobly gone before  
Instead of what comes gloriously to be;  
Vexing no more a too rebellious heart  
With hopes long fostered of the imperious mind,  
Content at last, austere drawn apart  
From the long sightless errands of the blind—

Dwelling upon some mountain crag in Greece  
Or castle in Capri, I shall have time  
To contemplate in everlasting peace  
How, sacred still from my small thirsty rime,  
Only the ancient verities remain:  
Life, and the end of life, and love, and pain.

L. R. LIND

## ILLINI POETRY

### TEA TIME

"Stephen, put your book away and run  
Down to the store. There's company for tea,  
And nothing in the house for anyone  
To eat. Bring back a cake and . . . now let's  
see . . .

Oh, yes; some cream, and half a dozen rolls,  
There's money for you; hurry lad."  
And like a runner to unimagined goals,  
The boy ran down the porch, not overglad  
To be thus snatched from fairyland. Bright  
swords

Clashed in his heart, and Lancelot drove hard  
His spear among the host, and many lords,  
Fighting and dying, in armor bent and scarred,  
Rose shouting from the pages flung behind.  
The street was hot, and life was most unkind.

L. R. LIND

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### VOICELESS

This is a word that needs no saying:

The heart will hear though the voice be still,  
As the flower hearkens to Springtime, straying  
Along the slope of an April hill;  
As the swallow hears in the night-winds crying

## ILLINI POETRY

A sound that the earth has never heard,  
Lost in the dark and the mist, gone flying  
Over the world like a frightened bird.

Mute are the lips that would be speaking  
Words that no lips have uttered quite  
So sweet to her, whom the heart goes seeking,  
A scattered mote from the dawn-star's light.  
Brave is the wish that the lips can cherish  
Still, in the face of a dark defeat;  
But what if they speak, and their soft words  
perish,  
As all words must, in the noisy beat

Of striving bodies, the ancient clamor  
That stirs the limbs to their bitter toil?  
The earth is an anvil and man a hammer,  
Fashioning life from the yielding soil.  
But love is a glorious muteness, bringing  
More joy than our twisted words can tell;  
It is the voice of silence singing  
A song that the stones and the trees know  
well.

Come, love, in the stillness of evening lying,  
We shall be silent and speak no word;  
The tongue is clever at falsifying;  
The heart speaks truth—and it shall be heard.

## ILLINI POETRY

Silence alone is more strong than thunder;  
The heart will know if the heart be true—  
Dear, in the ancient and tuneful wonder  
Of speechless things, I shall speak to you.  
L. R. LIND

### XENOPHANES, AP. ATH.

So might we say, by the fire lying  
On a soft couch in the winter chill,  
Sated, drinking the sweet wine, plying  
The stomach with roasted chick-peas still:

“Whence do you come, O gallant stranger,  
And what, pray tell us, may be your name?  
How many are yours of the years that change,  
sir?  
How old were you when the Persian came?”  
L. R. LIND

### TO SHELLEY

*Three Sonnets from the Prize Poem of 1928*

#### I

There is only one: there cannot be another  
To soar again on such unearthly wings  
As yours, O Ariel! Adonais' brother,  
Amid the realm of the spirit's wanderings.  
No one again to break his heart with dreaming.

## ILLINI POETRY

No one to triumph over time and death,  
And none to tremble with such glorious schem-  
ing  
As yours—to faint with beauty, to lose breath.

Before the world's deep sorrow—you have  
broken  
The bonds of earth: they but half held you fast:  
You are one with all the voices that have spoken  
As "trumpets of a prophecy"—O last  
And bravest of the mighty hearts, gone singing  
Into the plangent night, lone bird of passage  
winging!

### II

Your voice is in the note of a distant lyre  
Struck passionately over Grecian seas,  
And where the flames of Attic suns expire  
Upon the "violet crown," its melodies  
Borne onward by the streams of Ocean, flowing  
In rhythmic waves of rising music, sound  
Like the old sea-god's wondrous shell-horn,  
blowing  
Through Western lands and Western seas  
around.

O spirit whom the world and all its narrow  
Fetters could never bind. Life knows you still

## ILLINI POETRY

As some bright, flame-tipped, upward-arching  
    arrow  
Shot to the heavens from an English hill,  
Piercing the breast of mankind with a pang  
Where, through the bronze of Time, the shining  
    missile rang.

### III

In what high hour, beyond all re-possession,  
Did love beget you, wayward child of song.  
So weak to bear, so brave to sing the pressing  
Weight of a passion grown at last too strong?  
Born to a lot as heavy as that wasted  
And vulture eaten one's who dared the brief  
And dire patience of the gods, you tasted  
The wine of sorrow and the bread of grief.

But the white flame you bore to men burns  
    brightly  
Where every spirit that is free must gaze  
And gather comfort in its splendor, nightly  
Speeding the darkness with its steadfast blaze,  
Remembering you, Prometheus who rounded  
A silvery triumph-hymn, where a soul's struggle  
    sounded.

L. R. LIND



# ILLINI POETRY

## DIVAGATION OF A MAN AND HIS WIFE

### A Dramatic Phantasy

Prize Poem, 1927

being a  
serio-comic phantasy with a  
preface

### PREFACE

Anything may happen when a young London clerk and his wife go walking, in the sweetly solemn hour of a Spring twilight, through Regent's Park or, say, the Paddington Recreation Ground. They may talk of anything or nothing; they may clasp hands and run a bit across the grass; they may sit on a bench and quarrel—or plan the morrow's dinner. They will certainly, being young, talk of the future; and, if they have children at home, their speculative conversation will be quite serious. They will speak perhaps of death; but they will also speak of life.

It is this indecisive mood of two married lovers, at an hour when almost anything may happen, that I have tried to capture in my poem; and to those who will call it illogical, who will say that it has no head or tail and very little

## ILLINI POETRY

body, I can only reply that life itself is singularly illogical, and that to endow *it* with a head or tail is to make ludicrous, thereby, the mysteries of birth and death.

Down what strange road shall you  
and I

Go together, when we die?

Beneath what fearful, lovely trees

Shall we walk lightly as a breeze?

Look, my love, the night grows  
weird

And wispy like a pirate's beard.

What moon-lit alley-ways shall find

Our feet pursuing, where they wind

Among the dead and dying years,

The shadows of our silly fears?

The moon, like a bowl of cot-  
tage cheese

Molded in strange butteries,

Tilts between the curds of  
night

And spills a whey of milky  
light.

Shall you be frightened? Shall I  
play

A masque to drive your fears away,

A game beneath Plutonic firs

## ILLINI POETRY

By ruined, empty sepulchers?  
Cling to me, dear; we have  
come  
A long and weary way from  
home.  
These are not the woods we  
knew,  
Where strawberries and violets  
grew.  
These are not at all the ways  
We trod in other sunny days.  
We shall know, in that strange land,  
All we could never understand;  
What happens to the falling rose,  
And where the tattered twilight  
goes;  
How the candle fingers catch  
Pale life again beneath the match;  
Why the dawn grows pink and  
red—  
In that far country of the dead.  
Queer! the town lay over there,  
But now it is not anywhere.  
And if I heard you laugh be-  
fore,  
I do not hear you any more.  
Then life and love shall both be plain

## ILLINI POETRY

And sharp as lilacs in the rain;  
There will not be a shred of doubt  
To vex our coming in and out.  
The world above shall turn and turn  
Like some vast agonizing churn.  
And, with the changing shadows, we  
Shall saunter through Eternity.

I do not feel upon my arm  
The pressure of your fingers,  
warm

And fragrant with the scent of  
life.

Like a nicked and blunted  
knife,

The wind has slipped across  
my cheek.

Look upon me, dearest—speak!

Never shall the front door bang,  
Where fireflies like lanterns hang.  
We shall not look again upon  
Our small domestic Babylon. . . .  
The alarm clock with the broken  
spring,  
Canary bird that would not sing;  
The arm chair with the leather seat,  
Our book case, with "Shakespeare  
—Complete."

ILLINI POETRY

The squeaky faucet in the sink,  
My study desk, leprous with ink;  
The bath tub, with its nickeled knot  
And everlasting lie of "HOT."

What was that, dear? did you  
see

That twisted shape behind the  
tree?

Shape or ghost, I could not tell,  
It fled away so fast and well.

But can this be—dear, I shall  
play

A masque to drive your fears  
away.

Apprehen-  
sively, he  
plays and  
chaffers with  
her.

In that pale land, we shall be glad  
And most perpetually gay;  
We shall not mourn the lives we had  
Nor weary for a brisker day.

And, chattering with the wraiths  
that rove,

I shall talk of poetry,  
Of girls with whom I fell in love,  
And similar philosophy.

We are very silly, dear,  
To be so morbid, while the year

## ILLINI POETRY

Sings through the garden like a tune  
Played upon the harp of June.  
I will kiss your mouth and then  
We shall talk of life again,  
Of Paris and of picture-plays,  
Of dances in our college days.  
We are too young to ape the old  
With closet-tales—dear, you are  
cold!

He discovers,  
and grows  
frightened.

Life and death have merged be-  
yond  
All hope for me to break the  
bond!

Heavens! are we truly dead?  
Our bodies are not buried!  
Ah God! we move and seek to  
cry.

It is too late for us to die  
Among the kindly homes of  
men!

Too late for us to find again  
The comfort of a coffin bed,—  
Darling, we are already dead!

They lament  
the cruel  
hoax.

O cruel death, that we should be  
Caught helpless by Eternity!  
Unkindly death, thus unawares  
To catch us while we bandied cares

## ILLINI POETRY

Of household and of husbandry,  
Æsthetics and philosophy!  
This was not how at all, we say,  
We thought that we should "pass  
away"!

As unobtrusively as night,  
As limply as a squeezed delight,  
Without the glamour of a tomb  
To make them whisper in the room  
Where we should die a proper death  
And draw a last appropriate breath!  
We have not even touched the bed  
Where people weep when life has  
fled,

Bringing condolence and sighs  
To swell our earthly Paradise.  
Why, you have cheated us of all  
The smelly flowers around the wall!

They ration-  
alize, being  
at last  
reconciled—  
to what?

I saw how Jones, the lawyer,  
went

When his feeble life was spent,  
Leaving earth and sky and tree,  
His children and his wife and  
me

With little to remember by . . .  
That was a petty way to die.

## ILLINI POETRY

She speaks,  
not to be  
outdone.

And I saw how my maiden  
aunt,  
Who never let her parrot want,  
But never gave ten pounds or  
five  
To keep a crippled child alive,  
I saw how she said her good-  
bye . . .  
It was a paltry way to die.

Together:

O never ask where he has  
gone,  
What baleful latch-string she  
has drawn;  
Neither lived for more than  
life  
And neither knew the heart's  
red strife,  
The pain of empty after-while  
That only brings a crooked  
smile  
To lips that disappointment  
fills  
With outward mirth and in-  
ward chills.  
They chewed a stale and broken  
crust—



## ILLINI POETRY

They laugh,  
they  
brighten;  
these things  
being in-  
evitable.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.  
The shadows are more friendly  
here  
Than sunshine on a shiny bier:  
And we shall make a home as  
well  
Here, be it Heaven or be it  
Hell.

In an  
excited  
medley of  
wistful  
reminiscence.

Do you remember how the vines,  
With wild-cucumber porcupines  
Upon them, grew across the porch?  
How we lit the penny torch  
Upon the eve of Guy Fawkes day,  
Then threw the smouldered end  
away?

Do you recall the children's schemes,  
And how we read the "Hill of  
Dreams"?

Which arm was broken on the day  
You stumbled down the cellar way?

He (ex-  
pansively):

Oh, this is better than old age  
On earth, where but the printed page  
Held both our heart's felicity.

She (hurt):

Remember Jock and Cecily!

He (con-  
trite):

Forgive me. There was more than  
books,

## ILLINI POETRY

And more than merely longing looks  
At Beauty far beyond our grasp;  
There was the muggy little clasp  
Of little hands upon my knee,  
And little voices spoke to me.  
Beauty that was huggable,  
Immediate and lovable;  
A loveliness that could not fade—  
But, dear—the awful noise they  
made!

She  
(tartly):

Just like a man to fume about  
The children's going in and out!  
No wonder you were company  
Too often for your books—not me.  
O dear, shall we begin to quarrel?  
Aren't even ghosts genteel and  
moral?

He (com-  
passionately,  
withal  
proudly):

Little wife, I know that I  
Too often made you sit and cry.  
A brute—but many times, I think,  
I washed the dishes in the sink.

She (scorn-  
fully):

Oh you, with your small dignity  
Of dishes and such frippery!  
I often worked twelve hours or  
more,

ILLINI POETRY

And walked the babies on the floor,  
Changed diapers when there was  
    need  
And tied the thumbs that just *would*  
    bleed.  
You dare to talk of pots and pans?  
Oh, men are vain as caravans?

He  
(humbly):

Don't let us quarrel; here, I'll sing  
A love-song for your pleasuring:

Thereupon,  
he sings,  
in a com-  
mendable  
baritone.

I will not go into the town,  
    Though once the town was  
    fair;  
There are too many hostile eyes  
    To look upon me there.

But I shall go to Arcady  
    And bring you back a faun;  
That will dry the tears away  
    You wept while I was gone.

O hear me, love, the night  
    twists down,  
    And I will come again  
When all the bravest sunbeams  
    run  
    To wrestle with the rain.

## ILLINI POETRY

He  
(eagerly):

Now didn't that make you feel as  
though

Your row was not so hard to hoe?  
Of course, I didn't make a rhyme  
Of Hyde Park in the summer time,  
Or Hammersmith when evening  
falls

Along the Thames embankment  
walls;

And then my poem is quite askew  
Without a line concerning Kew.

But, dear, you like it? Tell me so.  
Your husband is a poet, no?

She, ap-  
praisingly,  
then per-  
emptorily,  
having be-  
thought  
herself of  
certain  
bodily  
comforts,  
necessary  
and proper  
for the  
nourishment  
of future  
races.

Can this  
be the  
maternal  
instinct  
at work?

He, lost in  
contempla-  
tion of the  
circum-

Very pretty, but I fear  
That singing brings no shelter here  
Bestir yourself! Winds blow in  
Hell,

If this be it, and Heaven as well.  
Like twisted pearls across the sky,  
April's rounded clouds go by,  
And eyes will follow as they go,  
For homing hearts will have it so.  
But I would have a friendly mouse,  
A hole for it—in fact, a house.

These shadows going to and fro,

## *ILLINI POETRY*

ambient  
shadows.

What do they think, what can they  
know?

That withered little memory  
Of some poor life's poor tragedy,  
He was a good man, I suppose,  
But now a ruined wraith he goes,  
Stumbling from tree to tree,—  
As insignificant as we.  
That darker shadow, feminine,  
Being softer and more fine,  
A hag, where once a goddess came—  
Ashes now, where once was flame.

She, ever  
the prac-  
tical woman,  
and having  
the last  
word, as  
usual.

What utter sentimental rot!  
Will you remember we have not  
A home among these shadows yet?  
You dear old drooping violet!  
Come, with all these shapes that  
roam,  
We will go and find a home,  
A place in which to put our feet  
And cook a bite or two to eat.  
From grotesque depths their eyes  
shall peer,  
Wondering why we tarry here.  
And, shaking their unearthly heads,  
They'll totter to their clammy beds.

## ILLINI POETRY

From cities long since populous.  
Time will creep to look at us,  
And then creep back again, while  
we  
Saunter through Eternity.

AND SO THEY SAUNTER.

L. R. LIND

## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

PRIZE POEM, 1929

"It sounds like a fairy tale. You like fairy tales?"

"I do," replied Denis.

"Then we have one point in common. I could listen to  
them for hours. There is something eternal about them."

—SOUTH WIND

## PART I: THE CASTLE-OF-QUIET-SLEEP

I—At twilight-time

II—The great-towered castle

III—Of passing years

### I

At twilight-time the drowsy robins fold  
Their wings, the squirrels all forget to scold

## ILLINI POETRY

The blue-jays, and the purple shadows creep  
Away from tree and bush, and take the steep  
Highroad to where the evening lands unfold.

The Sandman's shepherd gathers in the sheep,  
And counts them on his fingers as they leap  
The bar, until the last is in the fold  
At twilight-time.

The children stop their play, and seek the old  
Dames nodding in the doorway to be told  
Of elf and gnome and giant in the deep,  
Dark forest round the Castle-of-Quiet-Sleep,  
Whose high stone roofs and towers turn to gold  
At twilight-time.

## II

The great-towered castle—so the grandams  
say—  
Lies under the enchantment that a fay  
Cast over its grey roofs. The watchman stands  
On guard with sleep-blind eyes. The minstrel  
bands  
Do-re-mi-fa inaudibly their lay.  
In the great banquet hall no bright-flamed  
brands  
Flare on the smoke-stained walls, and Sleep  
commands

## ILLINI POETRY

The lords and gallant ladies that made gay  
The great-towered castle.

For all within the silent walls will stay  
Enchanted by the spell, until the day  
A prince comes riding from the purple lands  
Beyond the sun, and opens with young hands  
An ancient iron gate that shuts away  
The great-towered castle.

### III

Of passing years the sleepers take no care.  
His Majesty sits dozing in his chair  
Of state. The kitchen boy drives sleeping flies  
Away from dusty soup. The Chancellor tries  
To hide a yawn. The guardsmen in the square

Pay no attention to the changing skies,  
But stand like statues to immortalize  
Their order. All are captured in the snare  
Of passing years.

In the dark Tower of the Winding Stair,  
Alone, with scarlet poppies in her hair  
And lonely shadows in her dream-filled eyes,  
In quiet rest the Sleeping Beauty lies,  
Unmindful of the world and unaware  
Of passing years.



## ILLINI POETRY

### PART TWO: THE CHRISTENING FEAST

- I—Once on a time
- II—Old Master Stork
- III—Six golden plates
- IV—The Fairy Glower
- V—The Fairy Gentle
- VI—Throughout the land

#### I

Once on a time, in days of crinoline  
And powdered wigs, there lived a king and  
queen

Whose legendary kingdom was ruled best  
Of all the lovely meadow-countries west  
Of Fairyland. The river Serpentine

Meanders through the land in its sea-quest,  
And though there are no black ships to molest  
Its tranquil waters now, there might have been  
Once on a time.

The house-wives always keep their kitchens  
clean.

All of the pointed roofs are painted green.  
In every other elm tree is a nest  
Of wrens, and underneath, the old men rest  
And dream of flame-speared armies they have  
seen

Once on a time.

## ILLINI POETRY

### II

Old Master Stork, who owns and operates  
The baby-farm, bobbed at the delegates  
Sent by the Queen, and, pleased to gratify  
Her Majesty, went flapping through the sky  
And left his bundle at the palace gates.

(For he is always willing to comply  
With such requests. That is the reason why,  
In that fair land, nobody ever hates

Old Master Stork,

Except when he forgets and triplicates  
An order!) When the royal magistrates  
Came with the news, the good king winked one  
eye,

Rose joyously, and cried: "A toast, say I,  
A bumper to that prince of reprobates,

Old Master Stork!"

### III

Six golden plates the Majordomo bought,  
Stamped with the royal crest and finely wrought.  
He stored the cellar full of ginger-beer,  
And stocked the pantry-shelves with partridge,  
deer,  
And fat Welsh-rabbits that the huntsmen  
caught.

## ILLINI POETRY

The six old grey-eyed fairies who lived near  
Flew on their broom-sticks to the feast, with  
    queer  
Soft bundles. To the fairy guests were brought  
    Six golden plates.

During the feast a page advanced and sought  
The king. "Your majesty," he said, "What  
    ought  
We do—there is a glum old party here  
Who . . ." "'Sblood!" exclaimed his Majesty,  
    "My dear,  
We have forgot . . ." "Alack!", the poor queen  
    thought,  
    *"Six golden plates!"*

### IV

"The Fairy Glower!" said a trembling page  
And ushered in an old hag bent with age,  
Who scowled and blinked her piggish eyes with  
    hate.  
And when they served her with a silver plate,  
She cackled and her small head shook with rage.

After the feast each fairy gave a trait  
Or charm to the wee child in the crib of state,  
And last of all came that dour personage—  
    The Fairy Glower.

## ILLINI POETRY

"The wan fire-blossoms of the night presage,  
O child, thou'lt not acquire thy heritage,  
For thou shalt prick thy fingers on a straight  
Sharp spindle's point and die. Such is thy fate.  
Beware, proud king, how lightly you enrage  
"The Fairy Glower!"

### V

The Fairy Gentle had retired behind  
A curtain, guessing what was in the mind  
Of her sour relative, and did not dare  
Come out till she had vanished in green air.  
The fairy then said gently, "I divined

All this, O king, yet I was not aware  
How to prevent it, but do not despair,  
For when the sleep-spell comes, Sire, you shall  
find

The Fairy Gentle.

"The princess shall not wander in the blind  
Shadowy realms of Death. A Fate more kind  
Ordains that she lie sleep-enchanted there  
In the dark Tower of the Winding Stair  
A hundred years. So do the Weird Ones bind  
The Fairy Gentle."

## ILLINI POETRY

### VI

“Throughout the land let every spindle be  
Destroyed at once!” exclaimed his majesty.  
“Odds bobbs! we’ll show that hag how much  
we fear  
Her spells. Go summon all the heralds here,  
And we, ourself, shall tell them our decree!”  
The heralds, dressed in all their splendid gear,  
Through every town and village cried their  
queer  
Decree, till they had wandered blatantly  
Throughout the land.

The good wives were distressed, but willingly  
Destroyed their spindles, save one crotchety  
Old court-dame who had lived for many a year  
In a forgotten tower and did not hear  
The bright-plumed heralds marching solemnly  
Throughout the land.

### PART THREE: THE MAGIC WOOD

- I—Year after year
- II—One winter day
- III—Without a sound
- IV—As snow came down

## ILLINI POETRY

### I

Year after year, as changing seasons pass,  
The princess grew into a bright-haired lass,  
Who played at keeping house beneath a white  
Pavilion, helped the pages fly their kite,  
And hunted four-leaf clovers in the grass.

One vague dread sometimes marred the queen's  
delight.  
She saw the light hours pass in steady flight,  
The golden sands fall slowly through the glass,  
Year after year.

"She's growing older . . ." sighed the queen.  
"Alas . . ."  
Poor child . . ." "Pooh!" said the king. "Next  
Michaelmas  
She's only seventeen!" The queen was right  
As usual. The princess saw a knight—  
And spent more time before her looking-glass  
Year after year.

### II

One winter day the princess watched the snow  
Come drifting slowly down. "I did not know  
There was so much!"—she smiled. "The snow-  
flakes fall

## ILLINI POETRY

As if Old Mother Goose were plucking all  
The geese in heaven. The dead garden's so

Forlorn and desolate! and how the tall  
Slim maples shiver with the cold! The hall,  
I think, is a more cheerful place to go,  
One winter day,

"Than in the garden where the white winds  
blow."

And through the empty rooms she walked with  
slow

Echoing steps until she saw a small  
Grey door. There was no answer to her call,  
But only laughter in the hall below,  
One winter day.

### III

Without a sound the princess groped her way  
Along, keeping her scarlet dress away  
From the damp walls, nor stopping to explore  
The cobwebbed depths, until she reached a door  
Small as the first. She opened it half-way,

Looked in, and saw an antique dame who wore  
A much-patched skirt and bodice. From her  
store

Of wool the woman spun long threads of grey  
Without a sound.

## ILLINI POETRY

The princess, watching, said: "Please, Granny,  
may  
I try?" "Try spinning, did I hear you say?  
Here is the spindle, child . . ." She had no  
more  
Than touched it when she fell, and on the floor  
All in a heap of gold and scarlet lay,  
Without a sound.

### IV

As snow came down the courtiers dolefully  
Laid the fair child beneath a canopy  
Of silver cloth, and left her in the dark,  
There in the lonely tower where the lark  
Sang in the Spring. Then Sleep came quietly

Over the heavy hearts left in the stark  
Old castle, and the last dull-glowing spark  
Died in the pale white ashes, wearily,  
As snow came down.

That evening the tired carles that leisurely  
Trudged homeward were dumfounded not to see  
The many-towered palace in the park,  
And stood in quiet wonderment to mark  
The forest that had grown up silently  
As snow came down.



## ILLINI POETRY

### PART FOUR: A PRINCE COMES RIDING

I—The moon looked down

II—In the dark tower

III—With a long kiss

IV—The princess smiled

#### I

The moon looked down upon the castle walls,  
Making light trickle down, as water falls  
On silver stones, and long black shadows streak  
The gleaming battlements. Here lovers speak  
No vows, and no sleep-muddled watchman  
bawls

A challenge at the prince who comes to seek  
A shelter and a warm fire. On his cheek  
And helmet moonbeams lingered. Hearing his  
calls

The moon looked down.

“That’s funny . . .” thought the prince. “I  
doubt if all’s

Quite right. Why should the lord not have his  
thralls

On guard?” He hammered on the gate. The  
weak

Rust-bitten lock swung open with a creak,  
And as he vanished in the somber halls

The moon looked down.

## ILLINI POETRY

### II

In the dark tower, as if he could foresee  
What was to come, a guard moved drowsily.  
The prince knocked on the oaken door. No  
word  
Came back to him. He knocked again . . . the  
blurred  
Stone passage-ways reechoed mockingly.

"I doubt if they have ears, for no one heard  
That knocking!" thought the prince. A bird  
Flew past. The sleepers breathed uneasily  
In the dark tower.

He rubbed his doubting eyes, amazed to see  
The lords and ladies smiling stonily,  
Just as they were when the magic spell occurred.  
The princess, dreaming of a kiss, half-stirred  
Beneath the silken-shadowed canopy  
In the dark tower.

### III

With a long kiss the young prince broke the  
spell.  
The princess sighed as his dark shadow fell  
Across her face. Being a youth of tact,  
He chose to wake her with a gracious act . . .  
A shorter kiss would have done just as well.

## ILLINI POETRY

The dogs began to bark, the ducks quack-  
quacked,  
The babies squalled until their mothers smacked  
Them roundly. There was a row no prince  
could quell

With a long kiss.

All in one breath the women tried to tell  
A century of dreams. The palace bell  
Pealed fifteen thousand times before it cracked,  
And over the cobblestones the sabots clacked,  
As if the prince had loosed the Fiends of Hell  
With a long kiss.

### IV

The princess smiled and listened to the gay  
Confusion in the castle. "Weylaway!"  
Exclaimed the sleep-befuddled sovereign, wink-  
ing  
At his exasperated spouse, then, sinking  
Down in his chair, dozed off without delay.

There was a sound of golden goblets clinking  
In the great hall where all the court sat drinking,  
And while the minstrel sang a roundelay  
The princess smiled.

## ILLINI POETRY

The young prince whispered, as the purple day  
Crept home to sleep, such things as lovers say.  
Suddenly he stopped and sat up, blinking.  
And when the princess asked what he was  
thinking,

He said, "*What* if I'd gone the other way!"

The princess smiled.

WILLIAM MAXWELL

### ONLY

Only the sky and the wet wind's shadow  
Clouded and cool

Over the twilight and dripping meadow  
And treeless pool—

Never the duck nor the wild drake calling  
Lonely and harsh

Only the rain, hushed and silent, falling  
On reaching marsh . . .

Grasses and rain and sweet white clover,  
Hollowless, hill-less, the dim lands over.

FRANCES MEUSEL

### EPITAPH

Here is the grave of one who was  
The wan moon's wandering daughter.  
She could not wear a cloak of flame  
Who had a soul of water.

FRANCES MEUSEL

## ILLINI POETRY

### THE SINGING BIRD

A black tree on a golden hill,  
*Still, still, my heart, still*  
And in the bough a singing bird,  
*Still, my heart.*

The white bird singeth sweet and shrill,  
*Still, still, my heart, still.*  
And who enchanted hath not heard?  
*Still, my heart.*

He hath no wisdom nor no will,  
*Still, still, my heart, still.*  
Yet singeth my soul mad in me,  
*Still, my heart.*

And I will hearken here until,  
*Still, still, my heart, still.*  
My soul hangs high upon the tree,  
*Still—my heart.*

FRANCES MEUSEL

### SONG

(Of One Grown Weary of Enchantment)  
Incubi and succubæ,  
Demons who enchanted me,  
When beneath the fallow moon  
Wandered I in search of cover,

## ILLINI POETRY

Weave thy thrice-entwined spell,  
Staff and symbol, book and bell,  
Sing again the secret rune,  
Find for me a mortal lover!

Hand of shadow, lip of mist,  
Foot of fog and wrist of dust,  
Voice that speaks a hidden tongue,  
Eye that no sun shall discover—  
Sick am I of phantom men!  
Make thy moon-dark spell again,  
Let the secret rune be sung . . .  
Snare for me a mortal lover!

FRANCES R. MEUSEL

## EVENING

Evening is a servant girl.  
She wraps the golden Day  
Into a cloak of rose and pearl  
And saffron and dove-gray.  
The lady meets her lover, Night,  
And Evening steals away,  
So there is none can tell aright  
Of the wooing of the Day.

MARTHA RIGHTER

ILLINI POETRY

GOING DOWN TO LONDON

I'm going down to London  
When the year is in the spring,  
And I shall buy a whistle  
And I shall buy a ring.

I'll walk among the gardens—  
Perhaps I'll pick a rose,  
Or follow a pretty maiden  
Wherever the maiden goes ;

And if she's selling flowers,  
I'll buy some of her wares,  
And tell her that I love her  
And ask her if she cares.

We'll sit on the bank of the river  
And watch the old men fish ;  
We'll see some milk-white horses  
And then we'll make a wish—

And she will wish for romance,  
And I will wish for fame,—  
And she'll shed a tear at parting  
For her loves are all the same.

And when the spell is over,  
I'll come home to Dorsetshire,

## ILLINI POETRY

Where no one believes in wishing  
And hearts are not for hire.

I'll be glad when it is April  
And the birds begin to sing,  
For I'm going down to London  
When the year is in the spring.

LAURENCE F. TRIGGS

### EASTER PRELUDE

Hushed is every living thing,  
Expectant, leaning on the air  
To hear the earthly silence bear  
The first faint sounds of spring.

Sinner, pauper, rich man, saint—  
Slough the winter's tyrannies  
And rend from April's heresies  
The garments of restraint.

Time, the sage immutable,  
Contemplates the ancient scene;  
Smiles with wooden lips serene—  
And stays inscrutable.

For this mortality is frail  
And men forget they are not gods—  
And fondly turn against the odds  
That they shall fail.



## ILLINI POETRY

Drab penitence the spring annuls  
And men forget at Eastertide  
That prelude where three felons died  
At the place of skulls.

LAURENCE F. TRIGGS

### TO A CERTAIN GARDEN

Now ere the moon wanes and the night is  
clouded,  
While the dim winds blow softly on apace,  
Here where the quiet is so closely shrouded  
In this old garden, sweet as a petaled face,  
Young lovers make of moonlight a white fancy  
And girlish laughter tinkles through the gloom,  
Mindless of time and caverned from the sun-  
light,  
Like golden legends in a leaden tomb.

They do a grace for one whose day was broken  
And whose young fame first walked among  
these flowers;  
And even the prettiest vows so lightly spoken  
Seem the faint echoes of those earlier hours  
When beat the golden bird on silent wing,  
And one awoke and heard the planet sing.

BRUCE WEIRICK

## ILLINI POETRY

### BALLAD OF HENRY VIII

To a lyric panegyric, though in theme a bit  
satiric

On a topic misanthropic

Let the muse attune her lay;

While with harmonies euphonic, though per-  
haps somewhat sardonic

And laconic'ly ironic

Let the chronic cynic play.

I shall take as my protagonist that conjugal hex-  
agonist,

With brevity and levity

Relate his escapades

And without abuse or slandering recount his  
gay philandering,

His wandering meandering,

His pandering with maids.

So attend, while I with gaiety interpret for the  
laity,

Capriciously, facetiously

The monarch's woes and cares.

I'll explain with dramaturgy how His Highness  
did the clergy

And with humor tell the rumor

Of his numerous affairs.

## ILLINI POETRY

His father, quite pragmatic'ly, betroth'd him  
morganatic'ly

Unto a dame of haughty name  
Whose people came from Spain;  
To-wit, to Kate of Aragon whom he believed  
a paragon.

Boy!—She had it, was wholly fit  
Upon the throne to reign.

They settled down to nidify, the kingdom to  
solidify

With dower from the power  
Of the sour Spanish house;  
When alas!—That lovely Spanish figure soon  
began to vanish.

“We can't have that! She's far too fat!  
I'll hunt another spouse.”

Society's propriety became a d—ned satiety,

The monarch craved variety

From piety and vows.

Though monogamy's salubrious it left the king  
lugubrious,

The lust for sin with Anne Bolyn

Within him did arouse.

But the pope was quite pedantic and an antic so  
romantic

Drove him very nearly frantic

## ILLINI POETRY

And it got him rather hot,  
And though Woolsey waxed right voluble the  
bond remained insoluble.  
The saintly pope responded: "Nope,  
We can't untie the knot."

Now, it's quite apodeictical that such a ghastly  
spectacle  
Of bicker with the vicar  
Made him sicker than a fish,  
So he wrote a curt epistle with his cardinal's dis-  
missal  
To the duffer who was buffer  
And must suffer for his wish.

"The orders I'll administrate; the papacy de-  
fenestrate.  
The papal bull I shall annul  
Albeit it gets him sore,  
For there's nothing more engaging than to see a  
prelate raging  
When it's futile"; with these brutal  
Words he cast him out the door.

And by practices nefarious he named himself  
vicarious,  
The fount and source of all divorce

## ILLINI POETRY

And marital relief.  
His other loves were various, his passions multi-  
farious,  
Too manifold here to be told  
In poesy so brief.

An existence so uxorious at length becomes la-  
borious,  
Expires and retires  
From the lyres of his bard.  
Though he's now a stark cadaver his apologists  
palaver  
To exonerate and exculpate  
But find it rather hard.

Now, 'tis not for me, his laureate, the monarch  
to excoriate,  
Or witticize; or criticize  
Connubial archives,  
But, boys! before we speculate illicit love let's  
speculate,  
And count expense and consequence  
Of feeding many wives.

WILLIAM WINES















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ILLINI POETRY, 1924-1929 CHAMPAIGN



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